

Preachers of the Past

Timeless Texts



Various



Preachers of the Past



Bible Verses All Should Know



Scripture promises



Links



Preachers of the Past



Charles H. Spurgeon



Thomas Brooks



A.W. Pink



A.B. Simpson



Oswald Chambers



Dr. J. Vernon McGee



Henry Law



Andrew Murray



G. Campbell Morgan



J. R. Miller



J. C. Ryle

Charles H. Spurgeon

(1834 - 1892)

He was one of the most powerful preachers of this time period. Even today in modern evangelical circles he is said to be the "Prince of Preachers."

1. **A wonderful guarantee.**
2. **Thou shall not be afraid for the terror by night.**
3. **All the days of my appointed time will I wait**
4. **All they that see me laugh me to scorn.**
5. **All we like sheep have gone astray.**
6. **A man without fear**
7. **A Heavenly Escort**
8. **Be of Good Cheer**
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10. **One wrong step—and down we go!**
11. **The Doctrines of the Word are Unhewn Stones**
12. **Go Hindmost with My Standard**



A Wonderful Guarantee

I will strengthen thee. (Isaiah 41:10)

When called to serve or to suffer, we take stock of our strength, and we find it to be less than we thought and less than we need.

But let not our heart sink within us while we have such a word as this to fall back upon, for it guarantees us all that we can possibly need. God has strength omnipotent; that strength He can communicate to us; and His promise is that He will do so. He will be the food of our souls and the health of our hearts; and thus He will give us strength. There is no telling how much power God can put into a man. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no more a hindrance.

Do we not remember seasons of labor and trial in which we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves?

In the midst of danger we were calm, under bereavement we were resigned, in slander we were self-contained, and in sickness we were patient.

The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come upon us, We rise out of our feeble selves. Cowards play the man, foolish ones have wisdom given them, and the silent receive in the self-same hour what they shall speak, My own weakness makes me shrink, but God's promise makes me brave. Lord, strengthen me "according to thy word."



Thou shall not be afraid for the terror by night

What is this terror? It may be the cry of fire, or the noise of thieves, or fancied appearances, or the shriek of sudden sickness or death. We live in the world of death and sorrow, we may therefore look for ills as well in the night-watches as beneath the glare of the broiling sun. Nor should this alarm us, for be the terror what it may, the promise is that the believer shall not be afraid.

Why should he? Let us put it more closely, why should we? God our Father is here, and will be here all through the lonely hours; He is an almighty Watcher, a sleepless Guardian, a faithful Friend. Nothing can happen without His direction, for even hell itself is under His control. Darkness is not dark to Him. He has promised to be a wall of fire around His people--and who can break through such a barrier?

Worldlings may well be afraid, for they have an angry God above them, a guilty conscience within them, and a yawning hell beneath them; but we who rest in Jesus are saved from all these through rich mercy. If we give way to foolish fear we shall dishonour our profession, and lead others to doubt the reality of godliness. We ought to be afraid of being afraid, lest we should vex the Holy Spirit by foolish distrust. Down, then, ye dismal forebodings and groundless apprehensions, God has not forgotten to be gracious, nor shut up His tender mercies, it may be night in the soul, but there need be no terror, for the God of love changes not. Children of light may walk in darkness, but they are not therefore cast away, nay, they are now enabled to prove their adoption by trusting in their heavenly Father as hypocrites cannot do.

"Though the night be dark and dreary, Darkness cannot hide from Thee; Thou art He, who, never weary, Watchest where Thy people be."



All the days of my appointed time will I wait

A little stay on earth will make heaven more heavenly. Nothing makes rest so sweet as toil; nothing renders security so pleasant as exposure to alarms. The bitter quassia cups of earth will give a relish to the new wine which sparkles in the golden bowls of glory.

Our battered armour and scarred countenances will render more illustrious our victory above, when we are welcomed to the seats of those who have overcome the world.

We should not have full fellowship with Christ if we did not for awhile sojourn below, for He was baptized with a baptism of suffering among men, and we must be baptized with the same if we would share his kingdom.

Fellowship with Christ is so honourable that the sorest sorrow is a light price by which to procure it. Another reason for our lingering here is for the good of others. We would not wish to enter heaven till our work is done, and it may be that we are yet ordained to minister light to souls benighted in the wilderness of sin.

Our prolonged stay here is doubtless for God's glory. A tried saint, like a well-cut diamond, glitters much in the King's crown. Nothing reflects so much honour on a workman as a protracted and severe trial of his work, and its triumphant endurance of the ordeal without giving way in any part.

We are God's workmanship, in whom He will be glorified by our afflictions. It is for the honour of Jesus that we endure the trial of our faith with sacred joy. Let each man surrender his own longings to the glory of Jesus, and feel,

"If my lying in the dust would elevate my Lord by so much as an

inch, let me still lie among the pots of earth. If to live on earth for ever would make my Lord more glorious, it should be my heaven to be shut out of heaven."

Our time is fixed and settled by eternal decree. Let us not be anxious about it, but wait with patience till the gates of pearl shall open.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn

Mockery was a great ingredient in our Lord's woe. Judas mocked Him in the garden; the chief priests and scribes laughed Him to scorn; Herod set Him at nought; the servants and the soldiers jeered at Him, and brutally insulted Him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed His royalty; and on the tree all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at Him.

Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the quick.

Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with anguish far beyond all mortal guess, and then picture that motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt of one poor suffering victim!

Surely there must have been something more in the crucified One than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honoured Him with such contempt.

Was it not evil confessing, in the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross?

O Jesus, "despised and rejected of men," how couldst Thou die for men who treated Thee so ill?

Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree. We, too, have despised Thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet Thou bleedest to heal our wounds, and diest to give us life.

O that we could set Thee on a glorious high throne in all men's hearts! We would ring out Thy praises over land and sea till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject.

Thy creatures wrong Thee, O Thou sovereign Good! Thou art not loved, because not understood: This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile Ungrateful men, regardless of Thy smile.

All we like sheep have gone astray

Here a confession of sin common to all the elect people of God. They have all fallen, and therefore, in common chorus, they all say, from the first who entered heaven to the last who shall enter there,

"All we like sheep have gone astray."

The confession, while thus unanimous, is also special and particular:

"We have turned every one to his own way."

There is a peculiar sinfulness about every one of the individuals; all are sinful, but each one with some special aggravation not found in his fellow. It is the mark of genuine repentance that while it naturally associates itself with other penitents, it also takes up a position of loneliness.

"We have turned every one to his own way," is a confession that each man had sinned against light peculiar to himself, or sinned with an aggravation which he could not perceive in others.

This confession is unreserved; there is not a word to detract from its force, nor a syllable by way of excuse. The confession is a giving up of all pleas of self-righteousness. It is the declaration of men who are consciously guilty--guilty with aggravations, guilty without excuse: they stand with their weapons of rebellion broken in pieces, and cry,

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

Yet we hear no dolorous wailings attending this confession of sin; for the next sentence makes it almost a song.

"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

It is the most grievous sentence of the three, but it overflows with comfort. Strange is it that where misery was concentrated mercy reigned; where sorrow reached her climax weary souls find rest.

The Saviour bruised is the healing of bruised hearts. See how the lowliest penitence gives place to assured confidence through simply gazing at Christ on the cross!

A Man Without Fear

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee. (Exodus 3:12)

Of course, if the Lord sent Moses on an errand, He would not let him go alone. The tremendous risk which it would involve and the great power it would require would render it ridiculous for God to send a poor lone Hebrew to confront the mightiest king in all the world and then leave him to himself.

It could not be imagined that a wise God would match poor Moses with Pharaoh and the enormous forces of Egypt. Hence He says, "Certainly I will be with thee," as if it were out of the question that He would send him alone.

In my case, also, the same rule will hold good. If I go upon the Lord's errand with a simple reliance upon His power and a single eye to His glory, it is certain that He will be with me. His sending me binds Him to back me up. Is not this enough? What more can I want? If all the angels and arch-angels were with me. I might fail; but if He is with me, I must succeed.

Only let me take care that I act worthily toward this promise. Let me not go timidly, halfheartedly, carelessly, presumptuously. What manner of person ought he to be who has God with him! In such company it behoveth me to play the man and, like Moses, go in unto Pharaoh without fear.

A Heavenly Escort

And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest. (Genesis 28:15)

Do we need journeying mercies? Here are choice ones -- God's presence and preservation, In all places we need both of these, and in all places we shall have them if we go at the call of duty, and not merely according to our own fancy. Why should we look upon removal to another country as a sorrowful necessity when it is laid upon us by the divine will?

In all lands the believer is equally a pilgrim and a stranger; and yet in every region the Lord is His dwelling place, even as He has been to His saints in all generations. We may miss the protection of an earthly monarch, but when God says, "I will keep thee," we are in no real danger. This is a blessed passport for a traveler and a heavenly escort for an emigrant.

Jacob had never left his father's room before; he had been a mother's boy and not an adventurer like his brother. Yet he went abroad, and God went with him. He had little luggage and no attendants; yet no prince ever journeyed with a nobler bodyguard. Even while he slept in the open field, angels watched over him, and the Lord God spoke to him. If the Lord bids us go, let us say with our Lord Jesus, "Arise, let us go hence."

Be of Good Cheer

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

My Lord's words are true as to the tribulation. I have my share of it beyond all doubt. The flail is not hung up out of the way, nor can I hope that it will be laid aside so long as I lie upon the threshing floor, How can I look to be at home in the enemy's country, joyful while in exile, or comfortable in a wilderness? This is not my rest. This is the place of the furnace, and the forge, and the hammer. My experience tallies with my Lord's words.

I note how He bids me "be of good cheer." Alas! I am far too apt to be downcast. My spirit soon sinks when I am sorely tried. But I must not give way to this feeling. When my Lord bids me cheer up I must not dare to be cast down.

What is the argument which He uses to encourage me? Why, it is His own victory. He says, "I have overcome the world." His battle was much more severe than mine. I have not yet resisted unto blood. Why do I despair of overcoming? See, my soul, the enemy has been once overcome. I fight with a beaten foe. O world, Jesus has already vanquished thee; and in me, by His grace, He will overcome thee again. Therefore am I of good cheer and sing unto my conquering Lord.

A Sure Guide

I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. (Isaiah 42:16)

Think of the infinitely glorious Jehovah acting as a Guide to the blind! What boundless condescension does this imply! A blind man cannot find a way which he does not know. Even when he knows the road, it is hard for him to traverse it; but a road which he has not known is quite out of the question for his unguided feet. Now, we are by nature blind as to the way of salvation, and yet the Lord leads us into it and brings us to Himself, and then opens our eyes. As to the future, we are all of us blind and cannot see an hour before us; but the Lord Jesus will lead us even to our journey's end. Blessed be His name!

We cannot guess in which way deliverance can possibly come to us, but the Lord knows, and He will lead us till we shall have escaped every danger. Happy are those who place their hand in that of the great Guide and leave their way and themselves entirely with Him. He will bring them all the way; and when He has brought them home to glory and has opened their eyes to see the way by which He has led them, what a song of gratitude will they sing unto their great Benefactor! Lord, lead Thy poor blind child this day, for I know not my way!

One wrong step—and down we go!

**"How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life!"
Matthew 7:14**

In some sense, the path to heaven is very safe—but in other respects, there is no road so dangerous! It is beset with difficulties. One wrong step—and down we go! And how easy it is to take that treacherous step—if grace is absent!

What a slippery path is that—which some of us have to tread! How many times have we to exclaim with the Psalmist, "But as for me, my feet were slipping—and I was almost gone!"

If we were strong, sure-footed mountaineers, this would not matter so much; but in ourselves, how weak we are!

Even in the best roads—we soon falter!

In the smoothest paths—we quickly stumble!

These feeble knees of ours—can scarcely support our tottering weight!

A straw may trip us up—and a pebble can wound us!

We are mere infants, tremblingly taking our first steps in the walk of faith. Our heavenly Father holds us by the arms—or we would soon tumble down!

Oh, if we are kept from falling, how must we bless the patience, power and wisdom of God—who watches over us moment by moment—and day by day! Think—

how prone we are to sin,

how apt to choose dangerous paths,

how strong our tendency to cast ourselves down

—and these reflections will make us sing more sweetly than we have ever done, "Glory to Him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to present

us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy!" Jude 24

We have many foes—who try to push us down, and destroy us!

The road is rough—and we are weak!

But in addition to this, enemies lurk in ambush, who rush out when we least expect them, and labor to trip us up, or hurl us down the nearest deadly precipice!

Only an Almighty arm can preserve us from these unseen foes, who are seeking to destroy us at every step! Such an arm is engaged for our defense. He is faithful, who has promised, and He is able to keep us from falling, so that with a deep sense of our utter weakness, we may cherish a firm belief in our perfect safety!

"If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."—Exodus 20:25.

GOD'S altar was to be built of unhewn stones, that no trace of human skill or labour might be seen upon it. Human wisdom delights to trim and arrange the doctrines of the cross into a system more artificial and more congenial with the depraved tastes of fallen nature; instead, however, of improving the gospel carnal wisdom pollutes it, until it becomes another gospel, and not the truth of God at all.

All alterations and amendments of the Lord's own Word are defilements and pollutions. The proud heart of man is very anxious to have a hand in the justification of the soul before God; preparations for Christ are dreamed of, humblings and repentings are trusted in, good works are cried up, natural ability is much vaunted, and by all means the attempt is made to lift up human tools upon the divine altar. It were well if sinners would remember that so far from perfecting the Saviour's work, their carnal confidences only pollute and dishonour it. The Lord alone must be exalted in the work of atonement, and not a single mark of man's chisel or hammer will be endured. There is an inherent blasphemy in seeking to add to what Christ Jesus in His dying moments declared to be finished, or to improve that in which the Lord Jehovah finds perfect satisfaction. Trembling sinner, away with thy tools, and fall upon thy knees in humble supplication; and accept the Lord Jesus to be the altar of thine atonement, and rest in Him alone.

Many professors may take warning from this morning's text as to the doctrines which they believe. There is among Christians far too much inclination to square and reconcile the truths of revelation; this is a form of irreverence and unbelief, let us strive against it, and receive truth as we find it; rejoicing that the doctrines of the Word are unhewn stones, and so are all the more fit to build an altar for the Lord.

"They shall go hindmost with their standards."—Numbers 2:31

THE camp of Dan brought up the rear when the armies of Israel were on the march. The Danites occupied the hindmost place, but what mattered the position, since they were as truly part of the host as were the foremost tribes; they followed the same fiery cloudy pillar, they ate of the same manna, drank of the same spiritual rock, and journeyed to the same inheritance. Come, my heart, cheer up, though last and least; it is thy privilege to be in the army, and to fare as they fare who lead the van. Some one must be hindmost in honour and esteem, some one must do menial work for Jesus, and why should not I? In a poor village, among an ignorant peasantry; or in a back street, among degraded sinners, I will work on, and "go hindmost with my standard."

The Danites occupied a very useful place. Stragglers have to be picked up upon the march, and lost property has to be gathered from the field. Fiery spirits may dash forward over untrodden paths to learn fresh truth, and win more souls to Jesus; but some of a more conservative spirit may be well engaged in reminding the church of her ancient faith, and restoring her fainting sons. Every position has its duties, and the slowly moving children of God will find their peculiar state one in which they may be eminently a blessing to the whole host.

The rear guard is a place of danger. There are foes behind us as well as before us. Attacks may come from any quarter. We read that Amalek fell upon Israel, and slew some of the hindmost of them. The experienced Christian will find much work for his weapons in aiding those poor doubting, desponding, wavering, souls, who are hindmost in faith, knowledge, and joy. These must not be left unaided, and therefore be it the business of well-taught saints to bear their standards among the hindmost. My soul, do thou tenderly watch to help the hindmost this day.



Thomas Brooks

(1608–1680)

He preached before the English Parliament. He was later ejected in 1660 and remained in London as a Nonconformist preacher. During the Great Plague and Great Fire he worked in London. He wrote over a dozen books, most of which are devotional in character.

1. **A bubble, a shadow, a dream!**
2. **God's tools and instruments**
3. **A cooler hell**
4. **If you attempt to enthrone the creature!**
5. **It was good for me to be afflicted!**
6. **A Heavy Burden**
7. **A precious commodity in hell**
8. **A house without light!**
9. **A misery beyond all expression!**
10. **A Very Little Worm**



A bubble, a shadow, a dream!

"My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away."

Job 9:25

TIME is a precious talent which we are accountable for.

Cato and other heathens held that an account must be given, not only of our labor but also of our leisure. At the great day, it will appear that those who have spent their time in mourning over sin have done better than those who have spent their time in dancing; and those who have spent many days in pious humiliation better than those who have spent many days in idle recreations.

I have read of a devout man who, when he heard a clock strike, he would say, "Here is one more hour past, which I have to answer for!" Ah! as time is very precious so it is very short. Time is very swift; it is suddenly gone.

The ancients emblemed time with wings, as it were, not running but flying! Time is like the sun, which never stands still but is continually a-running his race. The sun did once stand still but time never did. Time is still running and flying! It is a bubble, a shadow, a dream!

Sirs! if the whole earth whereupon we tread were turned into a lump of gold it would not be able to purchase one minute of time! Oh! the regrettings of the damned for mispending precious time! Oh! what would they not give to be free, and to enjoy the means of grace one hour!

Ah! with what attention, with what intention, with what trembling and melting of heart, with what hungering and thirsting would they hear the Word!

Time, says Bernard, would be a precious commodity in hell, and

the selling of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds, if he had them.

Ah! as you love your precious immortal souls, as you would escape hell and come to heaven; as you would be happy in life and blessed in death, and glorious after death; don't spend any more of your precious time in drinking and gabbing, in carding, dicing, and dancing! Don't trifle away your time, because time is a talent that God will reckon with you for.

Ah! you may reckon upon years, many years yet to come; when possibly you have not so many hours to live! It may be this night you will have your final summons and then, in what a sad case will you be! Will you not wish that you had never been born?

Sirs! Time let slip cannot be recalled!

God's tools and instruments

"I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things." Isaiah 45:7

Let us see the hand of the Lord in this recent dreadful fire which has turned our once renowned London into a ruinous heap! London's sins were now so great, and God's wrath was now so hot that there was no quenching of the furious flames. The decree for the burning of London was now gone forth, and nothing could reverse it. The time of London's fall was now come. The fire had now received its commission from God to burn down the city and to turn it into a ruinous heap!

Certainly God is the great agent in all those dreadful judgments which befall people, cities, and kingdoms. Whoever or whatever be the rod it is God's hand which gives the stroke! The power of bringing judgments upon cities, God takes to Himself,

"When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" Amos 3:6.

Whatever that judgment is, which falls upon a city God is the author of it; He acts in it and orders it according to His own good pleasure. There is no judgment which accidentally falls upon any person, city, or country. Every judgment is inflicted by a divine power and providence. God had given a commission to the fire to burn with that force and violence as it did until London was laid in ashes!

Whoever kindled this fire God blew the coal! And therefore no arts, counsels, or endeavors of men were able to quench it.

All judgments are at the beck of God, and under the command of God. Whatever judgment God commands to destroy a person, a city, or country that judgment shall certainly and effectually

accomplish the command of God in spite of all that creatures can do. If God commissions the sword of war to walk abroad, and to glut itself with blood who can command it into the scabbard again? No art, power, or policy can cause that sword to lie still!

God, as He is our Creator, Preserver, and sovereign Lord has an absolute power both over our persons, lives, estates, and habitations: and when we have transgressed His righteous laws, He may do with us, and all we have as He pleases. He may turn us out of house and home, and burn up all our comforts round about us and yet do us no wrong.

"Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him." Psalm 115:3.

"The Lord does whatever pleases Him in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths." Psalm 135:6

Those things which seem accidental and chance to us are ordered by the wise counsel, power, and providence of God. Instruments can no more stir until God gives them a commission than the axe or the knife can cut by itself, without a hand. God makes use of whatever second causes He pleases, for the execution of His pleasure. And many times He makes the worst of men the rod of His indignation to chastise His people with! All inferior or subordinate causes are but God's tools and instruments, which He rules and guides according to His own will, power, and providence.

Job eyed God in the fire which fell from heaven, and in all the fiery trials which befell him. And therefore, he does not say, "The Lord gave and the devil took away!" Nor, "The Lord gave and the Chaldeans and Sabeans took away!" But "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised!" Job 1:20-21

Certainly without the cognizance and concurrence of a wise,

omniscient, and omnipotent God no creatures can move. Without His foresight and permission no event can befall any person, city or country.

Whatever the means or instruments of our misery are the hand is God's! It behooves us, in every judgment, to see the hand of the Lord, and to look through visible means to an invisible God!

"The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me!" Ruth 1:21

"The Lord brings death and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts!"

1 Samuel 2:6-7

A cooler hell

"God, I thank You that I'm not like other people greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

**"I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get."
Luke 18:11-12**

Many please and satisfy themselves with mere civility and common morality. They bless themselves that they are not swearers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor adulterers, etc. Their behavior is civil, sincere, harmless, and blameless.

But civility is not sanctity. Civility rested in is but a beautiful abomination a smooth way to hell and destruction.

Civility is very often the nurse of impiety, the mother of flattery, and an enemy to real sanctity.

There are those who are so blinded with the fair shows of civility that they can neither see the necessity nor beauty of sanctity. There are those who now bless themselves in their common morality, whom at last God will scorn and cast off for lack of real holiness and purity.

A moral man may be an utter stranger . . .

**to God,
to Christ,
to Scripture,
to the filthiness of sin,
to the depths and devices of Satan,
to their own hearts,
to the new birth,
to the great concerns of eternity,**

**to communion with Christ,
to the secret and inward ways and workings of the Spirit.**

Well, sirs, remember this though the moral man is good for many things yet he is not good enough to go to heaven! He who rises to no higher pitch than civility and morality shall never have communion with God in glory. The most moral man in the world, may be both Christless and graceless.

Morality is not sufficient to keep a man out of eternal misery. All morality can do, is to help a man to one of the best rooms and easiest beds which hell affords! For, as the moral man's sins are not so great as others so his punishments shall not be so great as others. This is all the comfort that can be given to a moral man that he shall have a cooler hell than others have. But this is but cold comfort.

Morality without piety is as a body without a soul. Will God ever accept of such a stinking sacrifice? Surely not!

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God."

Luke 18:13-14

If you attempt to enthrone the creature!

O Christian! God has removed one of your sweetest mercies, comforts, or enjoyments! It may be you have over-loved them, and over-prized them, and over-much delighted yourself in them. It may be they have often had your heart when they should have had but your hand. It may be that care, that concern, that confidence, that joy which should have been expended upon more noble objects has been expended upon them!

Your heart is Christ's bed of spices and it may be you have bedded your mercies with you when Christ has been made to lie outside! You have had room for them when you have had none for Him! They have had the best when the worst have been counted good enough for Christ!

It is said of Reuben, that he went up to his father's bed, Gen. 49:4. Ah! how often has one creature comfort, and sometimes another been put in between Christ and your souls! How often have your dear enjoyments gone up to Christ's bed! Your near and dear mercies have come into Christ's bed of love your hearts!

Now, if you take a husband, a child, a friend into that room in your soul which only belongs to God He will either embitter it, remove it, or be the death of it.

If once the love of a wife runs out more to a servant, than to her husband the husband will remove that servant; otherwise he was a servant worth gold.

Now, if God has stripped you of that very mercy with which you have often committed spiritual adultery and idolatry have you any cause to murmur?

There are those who love their mercies into their graves who hug their mercies to death who kiss them until they kill them! Many a

man has slain his mercies by setting too great a value upon them! Many a man has sunk his ship of mercy by overloading it. Over-loved mercies are seldom long-lived. The way to lose your mercies is to indulge them!

The way to destroy them is to fix your minds and hearts upon them. You may write bitterness and death upon that mercy first which has first taken away your heart from God.

Christian! Your heart is Christ's royal throne, and in this throne Christ will be chief! He will endure no competitor! If you attempt to enthrone the creature be it ever so near and dear unto you Christ will dethrone it! He will destroy it! He will quickly lay them in a bed of dust who shall aspire to His royal throne!

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword!"

Ezekiel 24:21

It was good for me to be afflicted!

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psalm 119:71

A gracious soul secretly concludes as stars shine brightest in the night, so God will make my soul shine and glisten like gold, while I am in this furnace and when I come out of the furnace of affliction.

'He knows the way that I take; and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold!' Job 23:10.

Surely, as the taste of honey opened Jonathan's eyes; so this cross, this affliction shall open my eyes. By this stroke I shall come to have a clearer sight of my sins and of my self, and a fuller sight of my God!

Job 33:27-28; 40:4-5; 13:1-7.

Surely this affliction shall proceed in the purging away of my dross! Isaiah 1:25.

Surely as ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and harrowing breaks hard clods; so these afflictions shall kill my sins, and soften my heart! Hosea 5:15, 6:1-3.

Surely as the plaster draws out the infectious core; so the afflictions which are upon me shall draw out the core of pride, the core of self-love, the core of envy, the core of earthliness, the core of formality, the core of hypocrisy!

Psalm 119:67, 71.

Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will crucify my heart more and more to the world; and the world to my heart! Gal. 6:14; Psalm 131:1-3.

**Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will keep pride from my soul!
Job 33:14-21.**

Surely these afflictions are but the Lord's pruning-knives, by which He will bleed my sins, and prune my heart, and make it more fertile and fruitful! They are but the Lord's potion, by which He will clear me, and rid me of those spiritual diseases and maladies, which are most deadly and dangerous to my soul!

Affliction is such a healing potion, as will carry away all soul-diseases, better than all other remedies! Zech. 13:8-9.

Surely these afflictions shall increase my spiritual communion with God! Rom. 5:3-4.

Surely by these afflictions, I shall be made to partake more of God's holiness! Heb. 12:10.

As black soap makes white clothes so do sharp afflictions make holy hearts!

Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will draw out my heart more and more to seek Him!

'In their afflictions they will seek Me early.' Hosea 5:15.

In times of affliction, Christians will industriously, speedily, early seek unto their Lord!

**Surely by these trials and troubles, the Lord will fix my soul more than ever upon the great concernments of the eternal world!
John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:17, 18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.**

**Surely by these afflictions the Lord will work in me more tenderness and compassion towards those who are afflicted!
Hebrews 10:34, 13:3.**

Surely these afflictions are but God's love-tokens!

'As many as I love I rebuke and chasten,' Rev. 3:19.

So says the holy Christian 'O my soul! be quiet, be still. All is sent in love, all is a fruit of divine favor. I see honey upon the top of every twig; I see the rod is but a rosemary branch; I have sugar with my gall, and wine with my wormwood; therefore be silent, O my soul!'

Afflictions abase the carnal attractions of the world outside us which might entice us! Affliction abates the lustiness of the flesh within us which might otherwise ensnare us!

Afflictions humble us and keep us low! Holy hearts will be humble under the afflicting hand of God. When God's rod is upon their backs their mouths shall be in the dust! A godly heart will lie lowest, when the hand of God is lifted highest.

All this proves that affliction is a mighty advantage to us!

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psalm 119:71

A heavy burden

Riches are a heavy burden, and often a hindrance to heaven, and happiness.

All the felicity of this world is MIXED. Our light is mixed with darkness, our joy with sorrow, our pleasures with pain, our honor with dishonor, our riches with wants. If our minds are spiritual, clear and quick, we may see in the felicity of this world—our wine mixed with water, our honey with gall, our sugar with wormwood, and our roses with prickles.

Surely all the things of this world are but bitter sweets. Sorrow attends worldly joy, danger attends worldly safety, loss attends worldly labors, tears attend worldly purposes. As to these things, men's hopes are vain, their sorrow certain, and joy feigned. The apostle calls this world 'a sea of glass,' a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. (Rev. 4:6, 15:2, 21:18).

The honors, profits, pleasures and delights of the world are like the gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars.

Tell why do you then neglect your duty towards God—to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world—and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in, and smiles upon you; and so much dejected, and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah's gourd withers before you?

The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved.

Worldly things are not able to secure you from the least evil; they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout, nor the jewel about the neck take away the pain of the teeth.

Our daily experience evidences this, that all the honors and riches which men enjoy, cannot free them from calamities, diseases, or death. Why then should that be a bar to keep you out of heaven—which cannot give you the least ease on earth?

Polycrates gave a large sum of money to Anacreon, who for two nights afterwards, was so troubled with worry how to keep it, and how to spend it; that he took the money back to Polycrates, saying that it was not worth the pains which he had already taken for it.

King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun, which had lately happened. No, said the duke, I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven. Ah, that this were not true of most professors in these days!

It is very sad to think, how their hearts and time are so much taken up with earthly things, that they have scarcely any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace!

A precious commodity in hell

Most men spend the greatest part of their time on things that are of little or no value; as Domitian, the Roman emperor, who spent his time in catching of flies.

Make a speedy and a thorough improvement of all opportunities of grace and mercy. Do not trifle away your golden seasons. You have much work to do in a short time. You have . . .

**a God to honor,
a race to run,
a crown to win,
a hell to escape,
a heaven to obtain,
weak graces to strengthen,
strong corruptions to weaken,
many temptations to withstand,
afflictions to bear,
many mercies to improve,
and many services to perform, etc.**

He who neglects a golden opportunity, does but create to himself a great deal of misery.

"Time," says Bernard, "would be a precious commodity in hell, and the use of it most gainful; where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them."

When men trifle away their precious time, and golden opportunities, playing and toying with this vanity and that vanity; we may ask whether these men have

—no Christ, no Scripture, no promises, no blessed experiences, no hopes of heavenly glories

—to enjoy and take delight in

A house without light!

"Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:30

Our earthly fire, when it burns it shines, it casts a light. It has light as well as heat in it. But the fire of hell burns—but it does not shine, it gives no light at all. It retains the property of burning—but it has lost the property of shining. Christ calls it "outer darkness," or utter darkness—that is, darkness beyond a darkness.

Light is a blessing that shall never shine into that infernal prison. In Jude verse 6, you read of "chains of darkness."

It would be a little ease, a little comfort, to the damned in hell—if they might have but light and liberty to walk up and down the infernal coasts; but this is too high a favor for them to enjoy; and therefore they shall be shackled and fettered down in chains of darkness, and in blackness of darkness—so that they may fully undergo the scorchings and burnings of divine wrath and fury forever and ever.

In Jude verse 13 you thus read, "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The words signify exceeding great darkness. Hell is a very dark and dismal region, and extreme are the miseries, horrors, and torments which are there. Sinners, when they are in hell, when they are in chains of darkness, when they are in blackness of darkness—they shall never more see light! Hell is a house without light!

Though our earthly fires have light as well as heat—yet the infernal fire has only heat to burn sinners; it has no light to refresh sinners; and this will be no small addition to their torment.

"He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves!" Colossians 1:13



A misery beyond all expression!

**"Then He will say to those on His left—Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!"
Matthew 25:41**

This solemn sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe! The last words that Christ will ever speak to the ungodly, will be: the most tormenting and dreadful, the most stinging and wounding, the most killing and damning!

Here is utter rejection: "Depart from Me—Pack! Begone! Get out of My sight! Let Me never more see your faces!"

"Depart from Me!" is the first and worst of that dreadful sentence which Christ shall pass upon the ungodly at last.

Every syllable sounds horror and terror, grief and sorrow, dread and astonishment—to all whom it concerns.

Certainly, the tears of hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven!

Here is imprecation: "You who are cursed!"

"But Lord, if we must depart, let us depart blessed!"

"No! Depart—you who are cursed!" You shall be . . .

cursed in your bodies,

and cursed in your souls,

and cursed by God,

and cursed by Christ,

and cursed by angels,

and cursed by saints,

and cursed by devils,

and cursed by your wicked companions!

Yes, you shall now curse your very selves, your very souls—that ever you have . . .

despised the gospel, refused the offers of grace, scorned Christ, and

neglected the means of your salvation!

O sinners, sinners—all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls! Now you curse every person and thing which stand in the way of your lusts, and which cross your designs. But at last, all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon you! Surely that man is eternally cursed—who is cursed by Christ Himself!

"But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place!" "No! Depart into the eternal fire!"

Here is vengeance and continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into eternal fire! The eternity of hell—is the hell of hell.

If all the fires that ever were in the world, were contracted into one fire—how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as 'painted fire' upon the wall—compared to the fire of hell. It is a very sad spectacle to behold a malefactor's body consumed little by little in a lingering fire. But ah, how sad, how dreadful, would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire—not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred or a thousand years—but forever and ever!

"If it were," says Cyril, "but for a thousand years, I could bear it; but seeing it is for eternity—this frightens and horrifies me!" "I am afraid of hell," says Isidore, "because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goes out!"

To be tormented without end—this is that which goes beyond all the bounds of desperation.

Grievous is the torment of the damned . . . for the bitterness of the punishments; but more grievous for the diversity of the punishments; but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments!

To lie in everlasting torments, to roar forever in anguish of heart, to rage forever for madness of soul, to weep, and grieve, and gnash the teeth

forever —is a misery beyond all expression!

Mark, everything that is conducive to the torments of the damned, is eternal:

God who damns them is eternal!

The fire which torments them is eternal!

The prison and chains which hold them are eternal!

The worm which gnaws them is eternal!

The sentence which is upon them, shall be eternal!

Fire is the most furious of all elements, and therefore the bodies of men cannot be more exquisitely tormented than with fire. The bodies which sinned on earth, shall be punished and tormented in hell. What can be more grievous and vexatious, more afflicting and tormenting to the bodies of men—than eternal fire? Oh, then, how will the bodies of men endure to dwell in unquenchable fire, to dwell in everlasting burnings! The brick-kilns of Egypt, the fiery furnace of Babylon, are but as a spark, compared to this tormenting hell, which has been prepared of old to punish the bodies of sinners with.

"The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless! Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?

Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" Is. 33:14

Wicked men, who are now the jolly fellows of the times, shall one day go from burning—to burning; from burning in sin—to burning in hell; from burning in flames of lusts —to burning in flames of torment; except there be found repentance on their side, and pardoning grace on God's side.

Surely, the serious thoughts of the agonies of hell while people live—is one blessed way to keep them from going into those torments after they die!

Look! as there is nothing more grievous than hell—so there is nothing more profitable than the fear of hell.

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!"

1 Thessalonians 1:10

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 5:9

A Very Little Worm

A well-grounded assurance is always attended with humility.

David, under assurance, cries out, "I am a worm and no man!"

The Hebrew word which is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, which a man can hardly see or perceive. Psalm 22:6.

**Abraham, under assurance, cries out, that he is but "dust and ashes!"
Jacob, under assurance, cries out, "I am not worthy of all the faithfulness and unfailing love You have shown to me!"**

Job, under assurance, "abhors himself in dust and ashes!"

Moses had the honor and the happiness to speak with God "face to face;" and yet "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Num. 12:3.

The great apostle Paul, under all the revelations and glorious manifestations of God to him, counts himself "less than the least of God's people." Eph. 3:8.

That is mere presumption, that is a delusion of the devil, and no sound assurance—which puffs and swells the souls of men with pride; which makes men prize themselves above others, above the value which God has put upon them.

A.W. Pink

(1886–1955)

Pink was born in Nottingham, England in 1886 and became a believer in Christ in his early twenties.

As his desire to grow in biblical knowledge increased Pink immigrated to the United States to study at Moody Bible Institute. In 1934 Pink returned to England, and within a few years turned his Christian service to writing books and pamphlets.

1. **Anxiety**
2. **Worldly Sorrow**
3. **The Two Natures**
4. **Faithfulness**
5. **Personal Holiness**
6. **Doctor" or "Brother"**
7. **Another Gospel**
8. **Bearing the Rod**
9. **Repent of Perish**
10. **Signs of the Times**



Anxiety

"Be anxious for nothing"

Philippians 4:6

Worrying is as definitely forbidden as theft. This needs to be carefully pondered and definitely realized by us, so that we do not excuse it as an innocent "infirmity."

The more we are convicted of the sinfulness of anxiety, the sooner are we likely to perceive that it is most dishonoring to God, and "strive against" it (Heb. 12:4). But how are we to "strive against" it?

First, by begging the Holy Spirit to grant us a deeper conviction of its enormity.

Second, by making it a subject of special and earnest prayer, that we may be delivered from this evil.

Third, by watching its beginning, and as soon as we are conscious of harassment of mind, as soon as we detect the unbelieving thought, lift up our heart to God and ask Him for deliverance from it.

The best antidote for anxiety is frequent meditation upon God's goodness, power and sufficiency.

When the saint can confidently realize "The Lord is My Shepherd," he must draw the conclusion, "I shall not want!" Immediately following our exhortation is, "but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

Nothing is too big and nothing is too little to spread before and

cast upon the Lord. The "with thanksgiving" is most important, yet it is the point at which we most fail. It means that before we receive God's answer, we thank Him for the same: it is the confidence of the child expecting his Father to be gracious.

**"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (anxious concern) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
(Matthew 6:25,33)**

Worldly Sorrow

**"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death"
(2 Cor. 7:10).**

We have already considered the nature of "godly sorrow" (see the "Godly Sorrow" articles in the May and June issues) and by what it is evidenced, namely, by a saving "repentance" or a forsaking of sin and turning unto God. It now remains for us to enquire wherein it differs from the "sorrow of the world." This brings us to a vitally-important distinction, for all sorrow over sin is not a "godly" one, neither does it lead to evangelical repentance: evangelical repentance we say, for there is sometimes a repentance or remorse—as was displayed in the tragic case of Judas—which does not terminate in "salvation." Such is "the sorrow of the world," that is, the sorrow of the unregenerate, of those who are strangers unto the Lord. So far from their sorrow leading to life, it ends in death.

The sorrow of the world is the grief and mortification of disappointed worldlings, of those who know not God but whose trust is in themselves or in some arm of flesh. They have relied for prosperity from the world, and the world has sadly failed them. They have sought satisfaction from its broken cisterns, only to have their hopes dashed. The bitter springs from which their ambitions have proceeded are pride and carnal self-respect, and their motives and occasions for indulging the same are as manifold as the deceitful lusts of the flesh. But frustrated plans and defeated expectations sour and enrage, and nature's greenness is turned into the drought of unrepentant grief. So far from leading the soul to God, it fills with wrath and enmity against Him. Its miserable subjects seek consolation from the world, endeavouring to drive away serious reflections by drowning themselves in its pleasures.

The sorrow of the world does not arise from just views of sin, nor does it proceed from any concern that God has been offended. It does not lead the soul to God in true penitence, nor turn to Him for consolation. The sorrow of the unregenerate is occasioned by temporal losses, which fill them with chagrin and dismay; by crimes which incur public disgrace for their perpetrators and their families; from the squandering of a goodly heritage which terminates in poverty and despair; from wandering from the path of chastity, and in consequence losing their good name among men: from intemperance and reckless living, which ends in ruined health and vain regrets for having played the fool. In all such cases there is no contrition of heart for having violated a righteous Law, offended a kind Creator, or been an occasion of stumbling to their fellows. It is only that they are incensed at the harvest which follows their evil sowing and fretful because lack of money or health prevents them from continuing such excesses.

There are some worldly men who experience religious convictions, and they are grieved because they cannot obtain Heaven in their own way. This is seen in the case of the rich young ruler who came to Christ, but who, when he learned that denying of self was required of him, “went away sorrowful” (Matt. 19:22). There are those who have a sense of eternity, and yet are wedded to their lusts. They desire happiness hereafter, but they will not forsake their idols now, and so they are troubled. They cannot have Christ and the world—Christ for their consciences—and the world for their affections. They are unwilling to break away from the love of this world so that they might be saved in the world to come, and therefore are they grieved that they cannot have both. A pertinent case in point is that of Balaam.

Such “sorrow” as we have referred to in the above paragraph is but a superficial and transient emotion which has no lasting and spiritual effects. Alas, of its possessors it has to be said, “your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away” (Hosea 6:4). Their weeping eyes soon dry up, as we see in

the cases of Esau and Ahab. Again—such sorrow is occasioned not by mourning over sin as sin, but over the retribution it brings. A solemn example of this appears in the life of Pharaoh when the Divine judgments were upon his kingdom: “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Entreat the LORD, that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people” (Exo. 8:8). Note well it was not, “Entreat the LORD to remove my pride, my obstinacy, my hatred of His people; but only let the plague be stayed.” Contrast the prayer of David under similar circumstances: “take away the iniquity of Thy servant” (2 Sam. 24:10)—not take away the pestilence from my land!

“The sorrow of the world worketh death” because that is the appointed and inevitable fruit of the impenitent workings of an unregenerate will. It is a great mistake to suppose that the natural tendency of trial and trouble, loss and pain, is unto good. Not so: their trend is rather to excite rebellion against God. It is only when our sufferings are Divinely sanctified to us that they are made to bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Just as surely as happiness is the attendant of holiness, so misery is the certain entail of sin. When the worldling’s dream of natural happiness has been dispelled by crime, by misfortune, or by the long-resisted Spirit of God, he feeds only on the sour bread of selfreproach and unblessed woe. He often willfully accelerates the desire for relief which he vainly hopes to find in death—which so far from ending his sorrow only conducts him into the blackness of darkness forever.

“The sorrow of the world worketh death”—temporal and eternal. “Death” is to be taken here in its widest latitude, including all the disastrous consequences of sin. The results of godly sorrow are salutary, the effects of worldly sorrow are abortive and evil. They produce only ill health and distress, and are attended with no consolation or compensation. The sorrow of the world debilitates the body, disturbs peace, impairs the mind, and breaks the spirit. There is no contrite seeking unto God on the part of the suffering one, but only a fretting and murmuring against Him. The more

miserable a man becomes the harder his heart: “they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds” (Rev. 16:10, 11). Worldly sorrow is the certain prelude to desperation unless God prevents, as witness the horrible cases of Saul, and Ahithophel.

How important it is, then, that we should seek grace to turn all our mourning unto a spiritual channel, that we may sorrow “after a godly manner”—with grief for having dishonoured God with a dependence on His mercy, with a purpose to henceforth obey Him. Sorrow over sin and exercise about our eternal interests will avail us nothing unless it works repentance, and even repentance may be counterfeited and so not be “unto salvation.” Unless sin be mourned over as the cause of all our suffering and God be viewed as the righteous yet merciful Author of the same, grief under afflictions produces only increasing enmity unto despair. If after prayerfully pondering these articles any of our readers are brought to grieve over the hardness of their hearts and are concerned because of their lack of godly sorrow, that is sure proof they are not devoid of this spiritual grace.

The Two Natures

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6); “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17). These and similar passages clearly connote that there are two distinct and diverse springs of action in the Christian, from which proceed evil and good works. The older expositors were accustomed to speak of these springs of action as “principles”—the principles of evil and holiness. Modern writers more frequently refer to them as “the two natures in the believer.” We have no objection against this form of expression, provided it be used to represent Scriptural realities and not human fancies. But it appears to us that there are not a few today who speak of the “two natures” and yet have no clear conception of what the term signifies, often conveying a faulty idea to the minds of their hearers.

In ordinary parlance “nature” expresses, first, the result of what we have by our origin: and second, the qualities that are developed in us by growth. Thus, we talk of anything bestial or devilish as being contrary to human nature—alas that the beasts so often put us to shame. More distinctly, we speak of a lion’s nature (ferocity), a vulture’s nature (feeding on carrion), a lamb’s nature (gentleness). A “nature,” then, describes what a creature is by birth and disposition. Now the Christian has experienced two births, and is subject to two growths. Two sets of moral qualities belong to him: the one as born of Adam, the other as born of God. But much caution needs to be exercised at this point, lest on the one hand we carnalize our conception of the new birth, or, on the other hand, dwell so much on the two natures that we lose sight of the person who possesses them, and thus practically deny his responsibility.

In the interests of clarity we must contemplate these two natures separately, considering first what we are as children of men, and then what we are as children of God. In contemplating what we are as men, we must distinguish sharply between what we are by God's creation, and what we became by our fall from that uprightness in which we were originally made, for fallen human nature is radically different from our primitive condition. But here, too, great care must be taken in defining that difference. Man did not lose any component part of his being by the Fall: he still consists of "spirit and soul and body." No essential element of his constitution was forfeited, none of his faculties were destroyed. Rather was his entire being vitiated and corrupted, stricken with a loathsome disease. A potato is still a potato when frozen; an apple remains an apple when decayed within, though no longer edible. By the Fall man relinquished his honour and glory, lost his holiness, and forfeited the favour of God; but he still retained his human nature.

It cannot be insisted upon too strongly that no essential part of man's complex make-up, no faculty of his being, was destroyed at the Fall, for multitudes are seeking to shelter behind a misconception at this very point. They suppose that man lost some vital part of his nature when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and that it is this loss which accounts for all his failures. Man imagines he is far more to be pitied than blamed. The blame, he supposes, belongs to his first parent, and he is to be pitied because deprived of his capability of working righteousness. It is in such a manner that Satan succeeds in deceiving many of his victims, and it is the bounden duty of the Christian minister to expose such a sophistry and drive the ungodly out of their refuge of lies. The truth is that man today possesses identically the same faculties as those with which Adam was originally created, and his accountability lies in the use he makes of those faculties, and his criminality consists in his abuse of the same.

On the other hand, there are not a few who believe that at the Fall man received a nature which he did not possess before, and in

his efforts to evade his responsibility he throws all the blame of his lawless actions on that evil nature. Equally erroneous and equally vain is such a subterfuge. No material addition was made to man's being at the Fall, any more than that some part was taken from it. That which entered man's being at the Fall was sin, and sin has defiled every part of his person—but for that we are to be blamed and not pitied. Nor has fallen man become so helplessly the victim of sin that his accountability is cancelled: rather does God hold him responsible to resist and reject every inclination unto evil, and will justly punish him because he fails to do so. Every attempt to negate human responsibility must be steadfastly resisted by us.

The youth differs much from the infant, and the man from the immature youth; nevertheless it is the same individual, the same human person, who passes through these stages. Men we are, and shall ever remain: whatever internal change we may be subject to at regeneration, and whatever change awaits the body at resurrection, we shall never lose our essential identity as God created us at the first. Let this be clearly understood and firmly grasped.

At the outset: we are the same persons all through. Neither the deprivation of spiritual life at the Fall, nor the communication of spiritual life at the new birth, affects the reality of our being in possession of what we commonly call human nature. By the Fall we did not become less than men; by regeneration we do not become more than men. That which essentially constitutes our manhood was not lost, and no matter whatever be imparted to us at regeneration, our individuality is never changed.

If the above distinctions be carefully borne in mind, particularly between what our nature essentially consists of and what it “accidentally” became by virtue of the changes passing upon it, then there should be less difficulty in our understanding what is signified by the Lord's assuming our nature. When the Son of God became incarnate, He took to Himself human nature. He was in every respect true Man, possessing spirit and soul and body:

“in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren” (Heb. 2:17). This does not explain the miracle and mystery of the Divine incarnation, for that is incomprehensible; but it states the fundamental fact of it. Christ did not inherit our corruption, for that was not an essential of manhood. He was born and ever remained immaculately pure and holy; nevertheless, He took upon Him our nature intrinsically considered.

Reverting for a moment to our opening passage: “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Here “the flesh” is the name given to human nature as fallen—it must not be restricted to the body (as in a few passages it is), but understood (as generally in the New Testament) of the entire human constitution. In affirming, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” Christ reiterated the basic and unchanging principle—repeated no less than nine times in Genesis 1—that every creature brings forth “after his kind.” The quality of the fruit is determined by the nature of the tree that bears it: an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Man’s fallen nature cannot yield that which is sinless. No matter how much fallen man may be educated, civilized, or religionized, in his natural state he cannot produce that which is acceptable to the thrice holy God. In order to that he must be born again—a new and sinless nature imparted to him.

“But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” A new, a spiritual life is communicated, from which the grand moral change in its subject proceeds. This communication of Divine life to the soul is viewed in the New Testament under various figures. It is likened to the implanting of an incorruptible “seed” in the soul (1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:9); to a cleansing of the heart, a “washing of water by the Word” (Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:26); to a renovation of the will, or a writing of God’s Law in the mind (Heb. 8:10). The figure of the “seed” conveys the idea of a subsequent growth; the washing of water suggests a process of cleansing only commenced; while that of God’s writing His Law in our minds intimates the durability and permanence of His work of grace. It is from this new life or nature, imparted by the Spirit, that all

spiritual life proceeds.

We have no desire to belittle the marvel and miracle of the new birth: so far from it, we freely accept our Lord's declaration that it is a mystery beyond man's power to solve (John 3:8). If the communication of natural life be an enigma to human understanding, much more so is the impartation of spiritual life. Thus, in our efforts to simplify one aspect of regeneration we seek to guard against falsifying it at another. What we wish to make clear is, that at the new birth no new faculties are added to man's soul, no addition is made to his essential threefold constitution. Previously, he possessed a spirit and soul and body; he does not now have a fourth thing bestowed upon him. It is the man himself who is born again. As at the Fall his person was vitiated, now his person is regenerated—the full effects of which will only appear at his glorification.

Having thus considered, very briefly, the two natures in the Christian, we must now distinguish sharply between them and the individual in whom they reside. A nature and a person are in many respects widely different. Whether unconverted or converted, the person is constitutionally the same: it is the one who was dead in trespasses and sins who has been Divinely quickened. It is identically the same individual who formerly was a child of disobedience, under condemnation, who is now justified and sanctified. And, my reader, it is to the person and not to his nature that accountability attaches. Deeds belong to the individual and not to his nature. No amount of quibbling can gainsay the fact that in his heart even the unregenerate is conscious that he is responsible to act and live contrary to his fallen nature, and that he is justly culpable if he yields to his depraved inclinations. It is on this very ground that God will judge him in the Day to come, and so self-evidently righteous will this be that "every mouth will be stopped" (Rom. 3:20) and God "will be clear when He judges" (Psa. 51:4).

Plain and simple though it be, yet we feel we must labour the point a little further. How many professing Christians today

speak of “the flesh,” in themselves and in others, in such a way as if its being an exhibition of the flesh thoroughly explained matters. Were one to rebuke another for conduct unbecoming a child of God, and he replied, Yes, that is the flesh working in me, such language would plainly evidence an attempt to escape responsibility. If evil deeds by a Christian were excusable on the ground that the flesh still remains within him, then by parity of reason every sinner on earth could excuse himself, and how then could God judge the world? In point of fact the unregenerate do, everywhere, fall back on their sinful nature to escape condemnation, whereas if they listened to conscience they would certainly know that their nature never compelled them to commit a single sin. It inclined them, but they were responsible to control and resist it, and the essence of their guilt is that they did not.

It is the man, then, who sins, and is the sinner; it is the man who needs to be forgiven and justified; it is the man who is responsible to walk not in the flesh but in the Spirit. It is the same person all through. It is the man who is born again, and not a nature. True, at the new birth he receives a new life or nature, so that he now has two natures, and his responsibility is to mortify the old and feed, strengthen, and be governed by the new. The flesh is in no wise improved by the presence of the “spirit,” any more than weeds are bettered by planting flowers in their midst. The flesh and the spirit are contrary to each other, and my responsibility lies in making no provision for the former, acting according to the dictates of the latter.

Faithfulness

“It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). From the preceding verse it is clear that the Apostle was having reference to the ministers of Christ, those whom He has appointed to act as officers in His churches. Other virtues are desirable, but fidelity is imperative. No matter how gifted a man may be, if he is untrue to this trust, he is an offense unto Christ and a stumblingblock to His people. Ministerial faithfulness includes loyalty to his Master, devotion to His interests, steadfast adherence to the preaching of His Word, dispensing the Truth unto those whose souls are committed to Him, not mixing it with speculations, much less substituting false doctrine. A far higher motive than the pleasing of his hearers must actuate and regulate ministerial service.

Those who have been much used of God have ever been men in whom this grace of faithfulness was outstandingly prominent. The father of all who believe is expressly designated “faithful Abraham” (Gal. 3:9). Concerning Moses the Lord testified, “who is faithful in all His house” (Num. 12:7). What a blessed witness is that borne to Daniel: “Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful” (Dan. 6:4). Of himself Paul wrote, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12). Concerning Timothy he testified, “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:17). What is now being recorded in the Lord’s “book of remembrance” of you and me, fellow-minister?

Loyalty to God has always been a costly matter, but individual faithfulness has never involved more personal sacrifice than it

does in this day of abounding disloyalty, hypocrisy and compromise. Faithful preaching will render the minister unpopular, and will empty, not “fill” churches. It will close doors against him, and if he be without a charge he will find his services are not wanted. It cost Joseph something to be faithful! It did Daniel; it did Paul; and it does every minister of Christ in this degenerate and adulterous age. How necessary it is then for the minister to strengthen his heart by laying hold of those promises which are specially given to faithfulness. Here is one of them: “the LORD preserveth the faithful” (Psa. 31:23)—from those rocks upon which so many self-seekers make shipwreck.

“He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully” (Jer. 23:28): no matter how unpalatable it may be to the flesh, how much of a weariness to those who wish to have their ears tickled with novelties, or how loud be the outcry against it. “A wicked messenger falleth into mischief; but a faithful ambassador is health” (Prov. 13:17): that is, he maintains his own soul in good health, and exerts a healing influence upon others. “A faithful witness will not lie” (Prov. 14:5): he who maintains a pure conscience before God will not dare to give forth a testimony which he knows to be untrue. Nor will he to obtain the good-will of men represent anything to be other than it is. Consequently, “He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness” (Prov. 12:17): that is, by making conscience of veracity and integrity, he makes it clear that he is governed by the principle of righteousness.

How much there is in Scripture to stimulate the minister unto fidelity! “A true (Hebrew, “faithful”) witness delivereth souls” (Prov. 14:25), and he is the only one who ever does so. Souls are caught fast in the meshes of Satan’s lies, and nothing but the sword of God’s Truth can cut them free. However unpopular he may be among men, the faithful witness is approved of and is pleasing to God. “As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters” (Prov. 25:13). Yes, such are “a sweet

savour to God" (2 Cor. 2:15). What holy encouragement is there here for the hearts of the Lord's servants! What rich compensation for the slights and sneers of men!

For there is no faithfulness in their mouths.... they flatter with their tongues" (Psa. 5:9). There is the identifying mark of the "hireling," the false witness. He aims at pleasing his hearers, making them feel satisfied with themselves, ever patting them on the back. But what are the springs from which integrity and fidelity issue? First, faith. It is striking to note that both in the Hebrew and the Greek the same word does duty for both "faith" (the noun) and "faithfulness" (the adjective). Unbelief, then, is the root of unfaithfulness.

Second the fear of God: "I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many" (Neh. 7:2). There is nothing like the fear of God to deliver us from the fear of men. Third, love of God, for where that is warm there must be the desire to please Him at all costs.

But let not the reader suppose that this grace is something restricted to Christ's ministers: not so, God requires it from all His people. This is clear from the opening verses of Ephesians, which is distinctly addressed to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." Much of what has been said above applies with equal force to the rank and file of the saints. They, too, will find that loyalty to God and fidelity to His Word will cost them not a little in the world today, where there is so much pretence, sham, and double dealing. It will result in their receiving the "cold shoulder" even from many of those who profess to be fellow- Christians. But this must not deter them: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10), is the grand word to lay hold of.

Faithful people have always been in a marked minority. "Help, Lord, for the godly men ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Psa. 12:1), cried David. Note how those two characteristics are conjoined, for piety and honesty are

inseparable —compare “good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23). So, too, Solomon exclaimed, “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find” (Prov. 20:6). Why is this? Because it is the part of fallen human nature to take the line of least resistance and choose the path easiest to the flesh. But remember, my reader, whoever you be, “lying lips are abomination to the LORD; but they that deal truly (Hebrew, “faithfully”) are His delight” (Prov. 12:22). Here is another of the Divine promises specially addressed to the faithful: “A faithful man shall abound with blessings” (Prov. 28:20): the true way to be happy is to be holy and honest. He who is true to God and man will be blest of Him. O that it may be said of us, “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers”

(3 John 5).

Personal Holiness

By our fall in Adam we not only lost the favor of God but also the purity of our nature, and therefore we need to be both reconciled to God and renewed in our inner man, for without personal holiness

"no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "

As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior); because it is written,

"Be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

God's nature is such that unless we be sanctified, there can be no communion between Him and us.

But can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? Genuine Christians discover so much carnality, filth, and vileness in themselves that they find it almost impossible to be assured they are holy. Nor is this difficulty solved, as in justification, by recognizing that though completely unholy in ourselves we are holy in Christ, for Scripture teaches that those who are sanctified by God are holy in themselves, though the evil nature has not been removed from them.

None but *"the pure in heart"* will ever *"see God"* (Matt. 5:8).

There must be that *renovation of soul* whereby our minds, affections and wills are brought into harmony with God. There must be that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God and abstinence from evil which issues from faith and love.

There must be that directing of all our actions to the glory of

God, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. There must be a spirit of holiness working within the believer's heart so as to sanctify his outward actions if they are to be acceptable unto Him in whom "there is no darkness". True, *there is perfect holiness in Christ for the believer, but there must also be a holy nature received from Him.*

There are some who appear to delight in the imputed obedience of Christ who make little or no concern about personal holiness. They have much to say about being arrayed in "the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10), who give no evidence that they are "clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5) or that they have "put on . . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another" (Col. 3:12 & 13).

How many there are today who suppose that if they have trusted in Christ, all is sure to be well with them at the last even though they are not personally holy. Under the pretense of honoring faith, Satan as an angel of light, has deceived and is now deceiving multitudes of souls.

When their "faith" is examined and tested, what is it worth? Nothing at all so far as insuring an entrance into heaven is concerned: it is a powerless, lifeless, fruitless thing.

The faith of God's elect is unto "the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). It is a faith which purifieth the heart (Acts 15:9), and it grieves over all impurity.

It is a faith which produces an unquestioning obedience (Heb. 11:8). They therefore do but delude themselves who suppose they are daily drawing nearer to heaven while they are following those courses which lead only to hell. He who thinks to come to the enjoyment of God without being personally holy, makes Him out to be an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity upon Him.

The genuineness of saving faith is only proved as it bears the blossoms of experimental godliness and the fruits of true piety.

In Christ, God has set before His people that standard of moral excellence which He requires them to aim and strive after. In His life we behold a glorious representation in our own nature of the walk of obedience which He demands of us. Christ conformed Himself to us by His abasing incarnation; how reasonable therefore it is that we should conform ourselves to Him in the way of obedience and sanctification.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

He came as near to us as was possible for Him to do; how reasonable then is it that we should endeavor to come as near as it is possible for us to do.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me" (Matt. 11:29).

If *"even Christ pleased not Himself"* (Rom. 15:3), how reasonable is it that we should be required to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him (Matt. 16:24), for without so doing we cannot be His disciples (Luke 14:27). If we are to be conformed to Christ in glory, how necessary that we first be conformed to Him in holiness:

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19):

Let him either put on the life of Christ, or drop the name of Christ.



Doctor" or "Brother"

What strange methods God sometimes employs in teaching His Children much needed lessons! This has recently been the writer's experience.

I have been approached by a "university" to accept from them a degree of "D. D." Asking for time to be given so that I might prayerfully seek from God, through His written word, a knowledge of His will, fuller light came than was expected.

I had very serious doubt's as to the permissibility of one of God's servants accepting a title of fleshly honor. I now perceive that it is wrong for me to receive it even complimentary.

Various friends, as a mark of respect, have addressed me as "Dr. Pink." I now ask them to please CEASE from doing so. Let it not be understood that I hereby condemn other men for what they allow. No, to their own Master they stand or fall. The principal passages which have helped me I now mention, praying that it may please God to also bless them to others.

FIRST,

to the false comforters of Job, Elihu (God's representative) said. "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give FLATTERING TITLES unto men" (Job 32:31).

SECOND,

"Be NOT ye called Rabbi" or teacher" (Matthew 23:8), which is what "Doctor" signifies.

THIRD, John 5:44 reproves those who "receive honor one of another" and bids us seek "the honor that cometh from God ONLY."

FOURTH,

none of the Lord's servants in the New Testament ever employed a title. "Paul, an apostle, "but never "the apostle Paul."

FIFTH,

the Son of God "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7); is it then fitting that His servants should now follow an opposite course?

SIXTH,

Christ bids us learn of Him who was "meek and lowly" (Matthew 11:29).

SEVENTH,

one of the marks of the apostasy as "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 17).

EIGHTH,

we are bidden to go forth unto Christ outside the camp "bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13).

For these reasons it does not seem to me to be fitting that one who is here as a representative and witness for a "despised and rejected" Christ should be honored and flattered of men.

Please address me as "BROTHER PINK"



Another Gospel

Satan is not an initiator but an imitator.

God has an only begotten Son-the Lord Jesus, so has Satan-"the son of Perdition" (2 Thess.2:3).

There is a Holy Trinity, and there is likewise a Trinity of Evil (Rev. 20:10). Do we read of the "children of God," so also we read of "the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38). Does God work in the former both to will and to do of His good pleasure, then we are told that Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2).

Is there a "mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16), so also is there a "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess 2:7). Are we told that God by His angels "seals" His servants in their foreheads (Rev 7:3), so also we learn that Satan by his agents sets a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16). Are we told that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), then Satan also provides his "deep things" (Greek-Rev. 2:24). Did Christ perform miracles, so also can Satan (2 Thess. 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a throne, so is Satan (Greek-Rev. 2:13).

Has Christ a Church, then Satan has his "synagogue" (Rev 2:9). Is Christ the Light of the world, then so is Satan himself "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Did Christ appoint "apostles," then Satan has his apostles, too (2 Cor. 11:13). And this leads us to consider: "The Gospel of Satan."

Satan is the arch-counterfeiter. The Devil is now busy at work in the same field in which the Lord sowed the good seed. He is seeking to prevent the growth of the wheat by another plant, the

tares, which closely resembles the wheat in appearance. In a word, by a process of imitation he is aiming to neutralize the Work of Christ.

Therefore, as Christ has a Gospel, Satan has a gospel too; the latter being a clever counterfeit of the former. So closely does the gospel of Satan resemble that which it parodies, multitudes of the unsaved are deceived by it.

It is to this gospel of Satan the apostle refers when he says to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6,7).

This false gospel was being heralded even in the days of the apostle, and a most awful curse was called down upon those who preached it. The apostle continues, "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." By the help of God we shall now endeavor to expound, or rather, expose this false gospel.

The gospel of Satan is not a system of revolutionary principles, nor yet a program of anarchy. It does not promote strife and war, but aims at peace and unity. It seeks not to set the mother against her daughter nor the father against his son, but fosters the fraternal spirit whereby the human race is regarded as one great "brotherhood." It does not seek to drag down the natural man, but to improve and uplift him.

It advocates education and cultivation and appeals to "the best that is within - It aims to make this world such a comfortable and congenial habitat that Christ's absence from it will not be felt and God will not be needed. It endeavors to occupy man so much with this world that he has no time or inclination to think of the world to come.

It propagates the principles of self-sacrifice, charity and benevolence, and teaches us to live for the good of others, and to be kind to all. It appeals strongly to the carnal mind and is popular with the masses, because it ignores the solemn facts that by nature man is a fallen creature, alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins, and that his only hope lies in being born again.

In contradistinction to the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of Satan teaches salvation by works. It inculcates justification before God on the ground of human merits. Its sacramental phrase is "Be good and do good"; but it fails to recognize that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing.

It announces salvation by character, which reverses the order of God's Word—character by, as the fruit of, salvation. Its various ramifications and organizations are manifold. Temperance, Reform Movements, "Christian Socialist Leagues," Ethical Culture Societies, "Peace Congresses" are all employed (perhaps unconsciously) in proclaiming this gospel of Satan—salvation by works.

The pledge card is substituted for Christ; social purity for individual regeneration, and politics and philosophy, for doctrine and godliness. The cultivation of the old man is considered more practical than the creation of a new man in Christ Jesus; whilst universal peace is looked for apart from the interposition and return of the Prince of Peace.

The apostles of Satan are not saloon-keepers and white-slave traffickers, but are for the most part ordained ministers. Thousands of those who occupy our modern pulpits are no longer engaged in presenting the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, but have turned aside from the Truth and have given heed unto fables.

Instead of magnifying the enormity of sin and setting forth its eternal consequences, they minimize it by declaring that sin is merely ignorance or the absence of good. Instead of warning their hearers to "flee from the wrath to come" they make God a liar by declaring that He is too loving and merciful to send any of His own creatures to eternal torment.

Instead of declaring that "without shedding of blood is no remission," they merely hold up Christ as the great Exemplar and exhort their hearers to "follow in His steps." Of them it must be said, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Their message may sound very plausible and their aim appear very praiseworthy, yet we read of them—"for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves (imitating) into the apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing [not to be wondered at] if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

In addition to the fact that today hundreds of churches are without a leader who faithfully declares the whole counsel of God and presents His way of salvation, we also have to face the additional fact that the majority of people in these churches are very unlikely to learn the Truth themselves.

The family altar, where a portion of God's Word was wont to be read daily is now, even in the homes of nominal Christians, largely a thing of the past. The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and it is not read in the pew.

The demands of this rushing age are so numerous, that multitudes have little time and still less inclination to make preparation for the meeting with God. Hence the majority who are

too indolent to search for themselves, are left at the mercy of those whom they pay to search for them; many of whom betray their trust by studying and expounding economic and social problems rather than the Oracles of God.

In Proverbs 14:12 we read, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." This "way" which ends in "death" is the Devil's Delusion—the gospel of Satan—a way of salvation by human attainment. It is a way which "seemeth right," that is to say, it is presented in such a plausible way that it appeals to the natural man: it is set forth in such a subtle and attractive manner, that it commends itself to the intelligence of its hearers. By virtue of the fact that it appropriates to itself religious terminology, sometimes appeals to the Bible for its support (whenever this suits its purpose), holds up before men lofty ideals, and is proclaimed by those who have graduated from our theological institutions, countless multitudes are decoyed and deceived by it.

The success of an illegitimate coiner depends largely upon how closely the counterfeit resembles the genuine article. Heresy is not so much the total denial of the truth as a perversion of it. That is why half a lie is always more dangerous than a complete repudiation.

Hence when the Father of Lies enters the pulpit it is not his custom to flatly deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, rather does he tacitly acknowledge them, and then proceed to give an erroneous interpretation and a false application. For example: he would not be so foolish as to boldly announce his disbelief in a personal God; he takes His existence for granted and then gives a false description of His character.

He announces that God is the spiritual Father of all men, when the Scriptures plainly tell us that we are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26), and that "as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

Further, he declares that God is far too merciful to ever send any member of the human race to Hell, when God Himself has said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:15). Again; Satan would not be so foolish as to ignore the central figure of human history—the Lord Jesus Christ; on the contrary, his gospel acknowledges Him to be the best man that ever lived.

Attention is drawn to His deeds of compassion and works of mercy, the beauty of His character and the sublimity of His teaching. His life is eulogized, but His vicarious Death is ignored, the all-important atoning work of the cross is never mentioned, whilst His triumphant and bodily resurrection from the grave is regarded as one of the credulities of a superstitious age.

It is a bloodless gospel, and presents a crossless Christ, who is received not as God manifest in the flesh, but merely as the Ideal Man.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3 we have a scripture which sheds much light upon our present theme. There we are told, "if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them."

He blinds the minds of unbelievers through hiding the light of the Gospel of Christ, and he does this by substituting his own gospel. Appropriately is he designated "The Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9).

In merely appealing to "the best that is within man," and in simply exhorting him to "lead a nobler life" there is afforded a general platform upon which those of every shade of opinion can unite and proclaim this common message.

Again we quote Proverbs 14:12—"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." It has been said with considerable truth that the way to Hell is paved with good intentions.

There will be many in the Lake of Fire who commended life with good intentions, honest resolutions and exalted ideals—those who were just in their dealings, fair in their transactions and charitable in all their ways; men who prided themselves in their integrity but who sought to justify themselves before God by their own righteousness; men who were moral, merciful and magnanimous, but who never saw themselves as guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinners needing a Saviour.

Such is the way which "seemeth right." Such is the way that commends itself to the carnal mind and recommends itself to multitudes of deluded ones today. The Devil's Delusion is that we can be saved by our own works, and justified by our own deeds; whereas, God tells us in His Word : "By grace are ye saved through faith. ..not of works lest any man should boast." And again, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."

A few years ago the writer became acquainted with one who was a lay preacher and an enthusiastic "Christian worker." For over seven years this friend had been engaged in public preaching and religious activities, but from certain expressions and phrases he used, the writer doubted whether this friend was a "born again" man.

When we began to question him, it was found that he was very imperfectly acquainted with the Scriptures and had only the vaguest conception of Christ's Work for sinners. For a time we sought to present the way of salvation in a simple and impersonal manner and to encourage our friend to study the Word for himself, in the hope that if he were still unsaved God would be pleased to reveal the Saviour he needed.

One night to our joy, the one who had been preaching the Gospel for several years, confessed that he had found Christ only the previous night.

He acknowledged (to use his own words) that he had been presenting "the Christ ideal" but not the Christ of the Cross. The writer believes there are thousands like this preacher who, perhaps, have been brought up in Sunday School, taught about the birth, life, and teachings of Jesus Christ, who believe in the historicity of His person, who spasmodically endeavor to practice His precepts, and who think that that is all that is necessary for their salvation.

Frequently, this class when they reach manhood go out into the world, encounter the attacks of atheists and infidels and are told that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth never lived. But the impressions of early days cannot be easily erased, and they remain steadfast in their declaration that they "believe in Jesus Christ." Yet, when their faith is examined, only too often it is found that though they believe many things about Jesus Christ they do not really believe in him.

They believe with the head that such a person lived (and, because they believe this imagine that therefore they are saved), but they have never thrown down the weapons of their warfare against Him, yielded themselves to Him, nor truly believed with their heart in Him.

The bare acceptance of an orthodox doctrine about the person of Christ without the heart being won by Him and the life devoted to Him, is another phase of that way "which seemeth right unto a man" but the end thereof are "the ways of death." A mere intellectual assent to the reality of Christ's person, and which goes no further, is another phase of the way which "seemeth right unto a man" but of which the end thereof "are the ways of death," or, in other words, is another aspect of the gospel of Satan.

And now, where do you stand? Are you in the way which "seemeth right," but which ends in death; or, are you in the Narrow Way which leadeth unto life? Have you truly forsaken the Broad Road which leadeth to death? Has the love of Christ created in your heart a hatred and horror of all that is displeasing to Him? Are you desirous that he should "reign over" you? (Luke 19:14). Are you relying wholly on His righteousness and blood for your acceptance with God?

Those who are trusting to an outward form of godliness, such as baptism or "confirmation!" those who are religious because it is considered a mark of respectability; those who attend some Church or Chapel because it is the fashion to do so; and, those who unite with some Denomination because they suppose that such a step will enable them to become Christians, are in the way which "ends in death"—death spiritual and eternal.

However pure our motives, however noble our intentions, however well-meaning our purposes, however sincere our endeavors, God will not acknowledge us as His sons, until we accept His Son.

A yet more specious form of Satan's gospel is to move preachers to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ and then tell their hearers that all God requires from them is to "believe" in His Son. Thereby thousands of impenitent souls are deluded into thinking they have been saved. But Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). To "repent" is to hate sin, to sorrow over it, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirits making the heart contrite before God. None except a broken heart can savingly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, thousands are deceived into supposing that they have "accepted Christ" as their "personal Saviour," who have not first received Him as their LORD. The Son of God did not come here to save His people in their sin, but "from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

To be saved from sins, is to be saved from ignoring and despising the authority of God, it is to abandon the course of self-will and self-pleasing, it is to "forsake our way" (Isa. 55:7).

It is to surrender to God's authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled by Him. The one who has never taken Christ's "yoke" upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to please Him in all the details of life, and yet supposes that he is "resting on the Finished Work of Christ" is deluded by the Devil.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew there are two scriptures which give us approximate results of Christ's Gospel and Satan's counterfeit. First, in verses 13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Second; in verses 22-23, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Yes, my reader, it is possible to work in the name of Christ, and even to preach in his name, and though the world knows us, the Church knows us, yet to be unknown to the Lord! How necessary is it then to find out where we really are; to examine ourselves and see whether we be in the faith; to measure ourselves by the Word of God and see if we are being deceived by our subtle Enemy; to find out whether we are building our house upon the sand, or whether it is erected on the Rock which is Jesus Christ.

May the Holy Spirit search our hearts, break our wills, slay our enmity against God, work in us a deep and true repentance, and direct our gaze to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of

the world.

Bearing the Rod

“Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). How can it be otherwise, living as he is in a world which is under the curse that Adam’s sin entailed, and, what is worse, under God’s judgment because of its casting out of His beloved Son. Yet the subject of “trouble” needs to be “rightly divided” if we are to properly heed that exhortation, “Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17), an important part of which consists in understanding the meaning and message of our Father to us in all the “trouble” which we encounter and experience.

As we turn to the Holy Scriptures for light upon this subject of Trouble, Suffering, Affliction, Tribulation, Persecution etc., we discover two distinct and different lines of Truth thereon, running all through the Word. On the one hand we read that, “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22), parallel with which are such passages as Luke 6:26, 2 Timothy 3:12 etc. But on the other hand, we read that “the curse causeless shall not come” (Prov. 26:2), that God does not “afflict willingly” (Lamentations 3:33), and that “if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Cor. 11:31). Much of the “trouble” and “affliction” experienced by us, we bring upon ourselves, through our own folly. We see this plainly exemplified in the natural realm: how many are now suffering bodily ills through intemperate eating and drinking: how many are nervous wrecks as the result of “burning the candle at both ends”!

The same principle holds good in the spiritual realm: the chastening rod of God is upon many of His children because of their self-will and self-pleasing: some of them are passing through sore financial straits because their “sins have withholden” God’s temporal mercies (Jeremiah 5:25); still others, who have been favored with clear and definite light from God as to a certain course of duty—e.g. separating themselves from religious associations which dishonor Christ—and because they have not walked therein, the Lord has “hedged up their way with thorns” (Hosea 2:6). Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to draw the inference that

every time we see a suffering Christian, we behold one who has seriously displeased God, and therefore is now being severely chastised by Him. It would be wrong to form such a conclusion concerning every case, because trouble and suffering issue from other causes, and are sent by God for other purposes than the reproof of sin—sent sometimes to experimentally fit the recipient for greater and higher usefulness in the service of Christ: compare 2 Corinthians 1:4.

Now from what has been pointed out above, it should be quite clear that real exercise of heart is called for from each one of us whenever painful trials come upon us; that we need to get down before God, and cry, “show me wherefore Thou contendedest with me” (Job 10:2). To take this attitude is the part of wisdom, for if God be dealing with us over something that has displeased Him, and we fail to humble ourselves before Him and learn of Him what it is which is now choking the channel of His highest blessing toward us, and obtain grace from Him to put right what is wrong, then the chastening “profits” us not, and further and increased chastisement must be our portion; for it is not until we are “exercised thereby,” exercised in conscience, that we have any promise it will issue in “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

If the “trouble” through which we are passing at any period of our lives be a reproof from God because of our sins or unfaithfulness, and instead of suspecting that He is displeased with us and taking our place in the dust before Him, begging Him to put His finger on the festering sore in our hearts: if instead, we proudly imagine that there is nothing wrong in our lives, that we have given God no cause to smite us, and complacently assume that we are suffering only for “righteousness’ sake,” and draw comfort from such promises as Matthew 5:11, 12, we are deceived by Satan, and are but “forsaking our own mercy” (Jonah 2:8). It is written, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper” (Prov. 28:13). Thus, whenever “trouble” comes upon a Christian it is always the safest policy to come to the Lord and say, “Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred” (Job 5:24).

From what has been said above, it will be seen that it often falls to the lot of God’s servants to perform a duty which is most unpleasant to the flesh.

When they come into contact with a Brother or Sister who is passing through deep waters, their natural desire is to administer comfort, but in some instances (at least) to do so would be guilty of “healing also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly”: and how is this done? The same verse tells us, by “saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14). That was what the ‘false prophets’ had done to Israel, and that was the very thing which carnal Israel desired: their demand was, “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophecy deceits” (Isa. 30:10); and human nature has not changed any since then!

It is a thankless task for any true servant of Christ today to be faithful to his Master, and faithful to the souls of those with whom he deals. Not that God requires him to think the worst of every case that comes to his notice, but that it is his burden duty to exhort each one to act on Job 10:2. But if he does do so, he may be assured at the beginning, that in the majority of cases he will be looked upon as harsh, hypercritical, unkind, like one of Job’s censorious comforters; for there are few indeed who have an honest heart, are ready to know the worst about themselves, and are willing to be cut by the knife of God’s Word. The great majority want only comfort , the “promises” of Scripture, the message of “Peace, peace.

But do not the Promises of God belong unto His children? Certainly they do: but here too “there is a season, and a time to every purpose” (Eccl. 3:1): there is a time when we may rightfully draw consolation and strength from the promises, and there is a time when we may not legitimately do so. When all is right between our souls and God, when every known sin has been confessed, and forsaken in sincere purpose of heart, then may we righteously draw milk from the breasts of Divine consolation. But just as there are times when it would be injurious for us to eat some of the things we do when we are well, so to take unto ourselves comfort from the Divine promises while sin is cherished in our hearts, is baneful and sinful.

The above (now slightly revised) recently sent by us in a letter to one passing through deep waters. It occurred to us that it might be a timely word for others. Many are now in the fiery furnace, and few indeed are there capable of speaking to them a word in season. It is not sufficient to

bid them “Trust in God,” and assure them that brighter days are ahead. The conscience needs to be searched; the wound must be probed and cleansed, before it is ready for “the balm of Gilead”; we must humble ourselves “beneath the mighty hand of God” (1 Pet. 5:6), if we are to be exalted again by Him in “due time.” May the Lord be pleased to bless the above unto some of “His own”.

Repent or Perish

These were the words of the incarnate Son of God. They have never been cancelled; nor will they be as long as this world lasts. Repentance is absolute and necessary if the sinner is to make peace with God (Isa. 27:5), for repentance is the throwing down the weapons of rebellion against Him. Repentance does not save, yet no sinner ever was or ever will be saved without it. None but Christ saves, but an impenitent heart cannot receive Him.

A sinner cannot truly believe until he repents. This is clear from the words of Christ concerning His forerunner, "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:32). It is also evident from His clarion call in Mark 1:15, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This is why the apostle Paul testified "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Make no mistake on this point dear reader, God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

In requiring repentance from us, God is pressing His righteous claims upon us. He is infinitely worthy of supreme love and honor, and of universal obedience. This we have wickedly denied Him. Both an acknowledgement and amendment of this is required from us. Our disaffection for Him and our rebellion against Him are to be owned and made an end of. Thus repentance is a heartfelt realization of how dreadfully I have failed, all through my life, to give God His rightful place in my heart and daily walk.

The righteousness of God's demand for my repentance is evident if we consider the heinous nature of sin. Sin is a renouncing of Him who made me. It is refusing Him His right to govern me. It is the determination to please myself; thus, it is rebellion against the Almighty. Sin is spiritual lawlessness, and utter disregard for God's authority. It is saying in my heart: I care not what God requires, I am going to have my own way; I

care not what be God's claim upon me, I am going to be lord over myself. Reader, do you realize that this is how you have lived?

Now true repentance issues from a realization in the heart, wrought therein by the Holy Spirit, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the awfulness of ignoring the claims of Him who made me, of defying His authority. It is therefore a holy hatred and horror of sin, a deep sorrow for it, and acknowledgement of it before God, and a complete heart-forsaking of it. Not until this is done will God pardon us. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

In true repentance the heart turns to God and acknowledges My heart has been set upon a vain world, which could not meet the needs of my soul; I forsook Thee, the fountain of living waters, and turned unto broken cisterns which held none: I now own and bewail my folly. But more, it says: I have been a disloyal and rebellious creature, but I will be so no longer. I now desire and determine with all my might to serve and obey Thee as my only Lord. I betake myself to Thee as my present and everlasting Portion.

Reader, be you a professing Christian or no, it is repent or perish. For every one of us, church members or otherwise, it is either turn Or burn; turn from your course of self-will and self-pleasing; turn in brokenness of heart to God, seeking His mercy in Christ; turn with full purpose of heart to please and serve him: or be tormented day and night, for ever and ever, in the Lake of Fire. Which shall it be? Oh, get down on your knees right now and beg God to give you the spirit of true repentance.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor 7:10).



Signs of the Time

No, let us assure the spiritual reader at the outset that we are not going to waste his time nor our space by a consideration of the latest doings of Hitler, Mussolini, and Co. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. 45:9): the child of God has nothing to do with their activities. It is something far more solemn than anything occurring in the political realm that we are now going to write upon, namely, the soul-deceiving character of most of the "Evangelism" of this degenerate and apostate generation.

It is generally recognized that spirituality is at a low ebb in Christendom, and not a few perceive that sound doctrine is rapidly on the wane, yet many of the Lord's people take comfort from supposing that the Gospel is still being widely preached and that large numbers are being saved thereby. Alas, their optimistic supposition is ill-founded and grounded in sand. If the "message" now being delivered in Mission Halls be examined, if the "tracts" which are scattered among the unchurched masses be scrutinized, if the "open air" speakers be carefully listened to, if the "sermons" or "addresses" of a "Soul-winning campaign" be analyzed; in short, if modern "Evangelism" be weighed in the balances of Holy Writ, it will be found wanting—lacking that which is vital to a genuine conversion, lacking what is essential if sinners are to be shown their need of a Saviour, lacking that which will produce the transfigured lives of new creatures in Christ Jesus.

It is in no captious spirit that we write, seeking to make a man an offender for a word. It is not that we are looking for perfection, and complain because we cannot find it; nor that we criticize others because they are not doing things as we think they should be done. No; no, it is a matter far more serious than that. The "evangelism" of the day is not only superficial to the last degree, but it is radically defective. It is utterly lacking a foundation on which to base an appeal for sinners to come to Christ. There is not only a lamentable lack of proportion (the mercy of God being made far more prominent than His holiness, His love than His wrath), but there is a fatal omission of that which God has given for the purpose of imparting a knowledge of sin. There is not only reprehensible

introducing of "bright singing," humorous witticisms and entertaining anecdotes, but there is a studied omission of the dark background upon which alone the Gospel can effectually shine forth.

But serious indeed as is the above indictment, it is only half of it—the negative side, that which is lacking. Worse still is that which is being retailed by the cheap-jerk evangelists of the day. The positive content of their message is nothing but a throwing of dust in the eyes of the sinner. His soul is put to sleep by the Devil's opiate, ministered in a most unsuspecting form. Those who really receive the "message" which is now being given out from most of the "orthodox" pulpits and platforms today are being fatally deceived. It is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but unless God sovereignly intervenes by a miracle of grace, all who follow it will surely find that the ends thereof are the ways of death. Tens of thousands who confidently imagine they are bound for Heaven will get a terrible disillusionment when they awake in Hell.

What is the Gospel? Is it a message of glad tidings from Heaven to make God-defying rebels at ease in their wickedness? Is it given for the purpose of assuring the pleasure-crazy young people that, providing they only "believe" there is nothing for them to fear in the future? One would certainly think so from the way in which the Gospel is presented—or rather perverted—by most of the "evangelists," and the more so when we look at the lives of their "converts." Surely those with any degree of spiritual discernment must perceive that to assure such that God loves them and His Son died for them, and that a full pardon for all their sins (past, present, and future) can be obtained by simply "accepting Christ as their personal Saviour," is but a casting of pearls before swine.

The Gospel is not a thing apart. It is not something independent of the prior revelation of God's Law. It is not an announcement that God has relaxed His justice or lowered the standard of His holiness. So far from that, when Scripturally expounded the Gospel presents the clearest demonstration and the most positive proof of the inexorableness of God's justice and of His infinite abhorrence of sin. But for Scripturally expounding the Gospel, beardless youths and businessmen who devote their spare time to "evangelistic effort," are quite unqualified. Alas that

the pride of the flesh suffers so many incompetent ones to rush in where those much wiser fear to tread. It is this multiplying of novices that is largely responsible for the woeful situation now confronting us, and because the "churches" and "assemblies" are so largely filled with their "converts," explains why they are so unspiritual and worldly.

No, my reader, the Gospel is very, very far from making light of sin. It reveals to us the terrible sword of His justice smiting His beloved Son in order that atonement might be made for the transgressions of His people. So far from the Gospel setting aside the Law, it exhibits the Saviour enduring the curse of it. Calvary supplied the most solemn and awe-inspiring display of God's hatred of sin that time or eternity will ever furnish. And do you imagine that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to worldlings and telling them that they "may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their personal Saviour" while they are wedded to their idols and their hearts still in love with sin? If I do so, I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

No doubt some readers are ready to object to our "harsh" and "sarcastic" statements above by asking, When the question was put "What must I do to be saved?" did not an inspired Apostle expressly say "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved?" Can we err, then, if we tell sinners the same thing today? Have we not Divine warrant for so doing? True, those words are found in Holy Writ, and because they are, many superficial and untrained people conclude they are justified in repeating them to all and sundry. But let it be pointed out that Acts 16:31 was not addressed to a promiscuous multitude, but to a particular individual, which at once intimates that it is not a message to be indiscriminately sounded forth, but rather a special word, to those whose characters correspond to the one to whom it was first spoken.

Verses of Scripture must not be wrenched from their setting, but weighed, interpreted, and applied in accord with their context; and that calls for prayerful consideration, careful meditation, and prolonged study; and it is failure at this point which accounts for these shoddy and worthless "messages" of this rush-ahead age. Look at the context of Acts 16:31, and

what do we find? What was the occasion, and to whom was it that the Apostle and his companion said "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"? A sevenfold answer is there furnished, which supplies a striking and complete delineation of the character of those to whom we are warranted in giving this truly evangelistic word. As we briefly name these seven details, let the reader carefully ponder them.

First, the man to whom those words were spoken had just witnessed the miracle-working power of God. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26). Second, in consequence thereof, the man was deeply stirred, even to the point of self-despair: "He drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled" (v. 27). Third, he felt the need of illumination: "Then he called for a light" (v. 29). Fourth, his self-complacency was utterly shattered, for he "came trembling" (v. 29). Fifth, he took his proper place (before God)—in the dust, for he "fell down before Paul and Silas" (v. 29). Sixth, he showed respect and consideration for God's servants, for he "brought them out" (v. 30). Seventh, then, with a deep concern for his soul, he asked "what must I do to be saved?"

Here, then, is something definite for our guidance—if we are willing to be guided. It was no giddy, careless, unconcerned person, who was exhorted to "simply" believe; but instead, one who gave clear evidence that a mighty work of God had already been wrought within him. He was an awakened soul (v. 27). In his case there was no need to press upon him his lost condition, for obviously he felt it; nor were the apostles required to urge upon him the duty of repentance, for his entire demeanor betokened his contrition. But to apply the words spoken to him unto those who are totally blind to their depraved state and completely dead toward God, would be more foolish than placing a bottle of smelling-salts to the nose of one who had just been dragged unconscious out of the water. Let the critic of this article read carefully through the Acts and see if he can find a single instance of the Apostles addressing a promiscuous audience or a company of idolatrous heathen and "simply" telling them to believe in Christ.

Just as the world was not ready for the New Testament before it received the Old, just as the Jews were not prepared for the ministry of Christ until John the Baptist had gone before Him with his call to repentance, so the unsaved are in no condition today for the Gospel till the Law be applied to their hearts, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). It is a waste of time to sow seed on ground which has never been plowed or spaded! To present the vicarious sacrifice of Christ to those whose dominant passion is to take their fill of sin, is to give that which is holy unto the dogs. What the unconverted need to hear about is the character of Him with whom they have to do, His claim upon them, His righteous demands, and the infinite enormity of disregarding Him and going on their own way.

The nature of Christ's salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day "evangelist." He announces a Saviour from Hell, rather than a Saviour from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of Fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness. The very first thing said of Him in the New Testament is, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save His people (not "from the wrath to come," but) from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Christ is a Saviour for those realizing something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, who felt the awful burden of it on their conscience, so loathe themselves for it, who long to be freed from its terrible dominion; and a Saviour for no others. Were He to "save from Hell" those who were still in love with sin, He would be the Minister of sin, condoning their wickedness and siding with them against God. What an unspeakably horrible and blasphemous thing with which to charge the Holy One!

Should the reader exclaim, I was not conscious of the heinousness of sin nor bowed down with a sense of my guilt when Christ saved me, then we unhesitatingly reply, Either you have never been saved at all, or you were not saved as early as you supposed. True, as the Christian grows in grace he has a clearer realization now what sin is—rebellion against God— and a deeper hatred of and sorrow for it: but to think that one may be saved by Christ whose conscience has never been smitten by the Spirit and

whose heart has not been made contrite before God, is to imagine something which has no existence whatever in the realm of fact. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12): the only ones who really seek relief from the Great Physician are they that are sick of sin—who long to be delivered from its God-dishonouring works and its soul-defiling pollutions.

Inasmuch, then, as Christ's salvation is a salvation from sin—from the love of it, from its dominion, from its guile and penalty—then it necessarily follows that the first great task and the chief work of the evangelist is to preach upon SIN: to define what sin (as distinct from crime) really is, to show wherein its infinite enormity consists; to trace out its manifold workings in the heart; to indicate that nothing less than eternal punishment is its desert. Ah, and preaching upon sin—not merely uttering a few platitudes concerning it, but devoting sermon after sermon to explaining what sin is in the light of God—will not make him popular nor draw the crowds, will it? No, it will not, and knowing this, those who love the praise of men more than the approbation of God, and who value their salary above immortal souls, trim their sails accordingly. "But such preaching will drive people away!" We answer, Far better drive the people away by faithful preaching than drive the Holy Spirit away by unfaithfully pandering to the flesh.

The terms of Christ's salvation are erroneously stated by the present-day evangelist. With very rare exceptions he tells his hearers that salvation is by grace and is received as a free gift: that Christ has done everything for the sinner, and nothing remains but for him to "believe"—to trust in the infinite merits of His blood. And so widely does this conception now prevail in "orthodox" circles, so frequently has it been dinned in their ears, so deeply has it taken root in their minds, that for one to now challenge it and denounce it as being so inadequate and one-sided as to be deceptive and erroneous, is for him to instantly court the stigma of being a heretic, and to be charged with dishonouring the finished work of Christ by inculcating salvation by works. Yet notwithstanding, the writer is quite prepared to run that risk.

Salvation is by grace, by grace alone, for a fallen creature cannot possibly

do anything to merit God's approval or earn His favour. Nevertheless, Divine grace is not exercised at the expense of holiness, for it never compromises with sin. It is also true that salvation is a free gift. but an empty hand must receive it, and not a hand which still tightly grasps the world! But it is not true that "Christ has done everything for the sinner." He did not fill the sinner's belly with the husks which the swine eat and find them unable to satisfy. He has not turned the sinner's back on the far country, arisen, gone to the Father, and acknowledged his sins—those are acts which the sinner himself must perform. True, he will not be saved for the performance of them, yet it is equally true that he cannot be saved without the performance of them—any more than the prodigal could receive the Father's kiss and ring while he still remained at a guilty distance from Him!

Something more than "believing" is necessary to salvation. A heart that is steeled in rebellion against God cannot savingly believe: it must first be broken. It is written "except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is just as essential as faith, yea, the latter cannot be without the former: "Repented not afterward, that ye might believe" (Matt. 21:32). The order is clearly enough laid down by Christ: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Repentance is sorrowing for sin. Repentance is a heart-repudiation of sin. Repentance is a heart determination to forsake sin. And where there is true repentance grace is free to act, for the requirements of holiness are conserved when sin is renounced. Thus, it is the duty of the evangelist to cry "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD (from whom he departed in Adam), and He will have mercy upon him" (Isa 55:7). His task is to call on his hearers to lay down the weapons of their warfare against God, and then to sue for mercy through Christ.

The way of salvation is falsely defined. In most instances the modern "evangelist" assures his congregation that all any sinner has to do in order to escape Hell and make sure of Heaven is to "receive Christ as his personal Saviour." But such teaching is utterly misleading. No one can receive Christ as Saviour while he rejects Him as Lord. It is true the preacher adds that the one who accepts Christ should also surrender to

Him as Lord, but he at once spoils it by asserting that though the convert fails to do so, nevertheless Heaven is sure to him. That is one of the Devil's lies. Only those who are spiritually blind would declare that Christ will save any who despise His authority and refuse His yoke: why, my reader, that would not be grace but a disgrace—charging Christ with placing a premium on lawlessness.

It is in His office of Lord that Christ maintains God's honour, sub-serves His government, enforces His Law; and if the reader will turn to those passages—Luke 1:46, 47; Acts 5:31; 2 Peter 1:11, 2:20, 3:2, 3:18— where the two titles occur, he will find that it is always "Lord and Saviour," and not "Saviour and Lord." Therefore, those who have not bowed to Christ's sceptre and enthroned Him in their hearts and lives, and yet imagine that they are trusting in Him as their Saviour, are deceived, and unless God disillusion them they will go down to the everlasting burnings with a lie in their right hand (Isa. 44:20). Christ is "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9), but the attitude of those who submit not to His Lordship is "we will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). Pause then, my reader, and honestly face the question: are you subject to His will, are you sincerely endeavouring to keep His commandments?

Alas, alas, God's "way of salvation" is almost entirely unknown today. The nature of Christ's salvation is almost universally misunderstood, and the terms of His salvation misrepresented on every hand. The "Gospel" which is now being proclaimed is, in nine cases out of every ten, but a perversion of the Truth, and tens of thousands, assured they are bound for Heaven, are now hastening to Hell, as fast as time can take them. Things are far, far worse in Christendom than even the "pessimist" and the "alarmist" suppose. We are not a prophet, nor shall we indulge in any speculation of what Biblical prophecy forecasts—wiser men than the writer have often made fools of themselves by so doing. We are frank to say that we know not what God is about to do. Religious conditions were much worse, even in England, one hundred and fifty years ago. But this we greatly fear; unless God is pleased to grant a real revival, it will not be long ere "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2), for the light of the true Gospel is rapidly

disappearing. Modern "Evangelism" constitutes, in our judgment, the most solemn of all the "signs of the times."

What must the people of God do in view of the existing situation? Ephesians 5:11 supplies the Divine answer: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," and everything opposed to the light of the Word is "darkness." It is the bounden duty of every Christian to have no dealings with the "evangelistic" monstrosity of the day; to withhold all moral and financial support of the same, to attend none of their meetings, to circulate none of their tracts. Those preachers who tell sinners they may be saved without forsaking their idols, without repenting, without surrendering to the Lordship of Christ, are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works and that Heaven must be earned by our own efforts.

A.B. Simpson

(1843 - 1919)

He was one of the most important Christian workers of his day. He was an ardent soul-winner and was active in raising up new believers and in training Christian workers.

He wrote over 70 books on the Bible and the Christian life. His many hymns and poems are full of inspiration and truth. He was the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

1. **Arm Yourself!**
2. **Be not dismayed; for I am thy God**
3. **Blessed is the man**
4. **Casting all your care upon him**
5. **Delight thyself also in the Lord**
6. **The battle is not yours**
7. **The death of self**
8. **Be Careful for Nothing**
9. **Emblems And Aspects Of The Holy Spirit**

10. **Have thou Authority over Ten Cities**

Arm Yourself!

When the Lord calls us to serve Him, our hearts are overjoyed. We are excited and eager to do our best. But very soon we discover that things would go a whole lot smoother if circumstances would be more favorable—if finances weren't so tight, if John Doe with his strange ideas wouldn't be in leadership, if we wouldn't have to work beside Mary Major with her overbearing personality.

As time goes by, our initial excitement wears off, and the irritations, disappointments and conflicts with others seem to grow stronger. Finally we get to the point where we can't take it anymore and we either start fighting for our rights or we quietly walk off with hurt and bitterness in our hearts.

Why couldn't we survive in serving the Lord, even though we began with willing and sincere hearts?

With the Same Mind

Could it be that we forgot we were in a battle that is not against flesh and blood? Instead, we end up fighting John and Mary instead of our real enemy. Did we arm ourselves correctly for the spiritual battle we entered as Paul describes in Ephesians? If our answer is yes, what are we still missing?

I believe our answer is found in the letter the Apostle Peter wrote near the end of his life: "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind" (1 Peter 4:1).

Have we armed ourselves with the willingness to suffer—to the same extent that Christ suffered for us when He was on earth?

I am well aware that the idea of embracing suffering does not fit our 21st-century concept of following and serving Christ. Yet the Bible teaches that suffering for Him is our privilege: "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

Does that mean we all should seek out beatings and martyrdom? No, that's not what it means. The Lord wants us to arm ourselves with a mind to suffer just as He did, so the enemy has nothing to work with to get us out of the battle.

The Way to Obedience

We must never forget that Christ did not suffer just during His three years of public ministry or the last few days of His life when He was crucified. No, He suffered throughout His life on earth. He who was without sin lived daily with the corruption and sinfulness of lost humanity.

His own family members said He had gone mentally insane. The religious community misunderstood Him and called Him a demon-possessed man. His disciples didn't understand Him, and when He needed them most, they ran away. From birth to the cross, His life was full of pain, loneliness and constant misunderstanding. He is called a man of sorrows and grief. That's the Jesus of the New Testament.

In the midst of it all, He chose to suffer in the flesh by saying no to Himself. He never fought for Himself, argued His case or attacked anyone to defend His rights. And in the end, Jesus was able to say, "Not My will, but Thine," embracing the cross to fulfill His Father's will.

Suffering in the flesh became the means for Jesus to learn obedience to His Father. And His life is our model, says Peter: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you

should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Finishing Strong

But what was the reason for Christ's suffering and death? To redeem mankind. And so it is with us. We can only become agents of redemption if we are willing to embrace suffering in the flesh—choosing to deny self and accepting death to our own desires

My dear friend, if you want to finish strong in your service to the Lord, then you must make a deliberate decision to arm yourself with a mind to suffer as Jesus did. It is never easy for our flesh when we choose to spend time alone in prayer, fast for several days, give up certain material possessions or perhaps follow the Lord's leading to a difficult mission field. But it's a choice we make for others.

Throughout his days as a disciple, Peter battled for his rights and the number-one position on the team. But in his letter, he tells us, in essence:

"Brothers and sisters, take Jesus as your example. The moment you remove yourselves from this reality, the devil will take advantage of you. And all of a sudden, relationships break down and revenge, bitterness and unforgiveness will take hold of you. Don't fight, don't argue, don't look for the first place for yourself. Don't look for anything. Always follow Him who suffered for you. This is the secret of staying in the battle."

And when we do this, nothing—no circumstances, disappointments, financial problems, misunderstandings or shortcomings of leaders and co-workers—will be able to take us out of the battle!

For the sake of Jesus and His kingdom, will you make this decision today?



Be not dismayed; for I am thy God

How tenderly God soothes our fears! How sweetly He says in the introductory verse, Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: . . . I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. And yet again, still with tender thoughtfulness, I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee (Isaiah 41:13). He does not say it only once, but He keeps holding our right hand and repeating such promises.

The blessed Lord condensed it all into one single message of eternal comfort spoken to the disciples on the Sea of Galilee, It is I, be not afraid. He is the antidote to fear; He is the remedy for trouble; He is the substance and the sum of deliverance. We should, therefore, rise above fear. Let us keep our eyes fastened upon Him; let us abide continually in Him; let us be content with Him. Let us cling closely to Him and cry, Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea (Psalm 46:2).

Blessed is the man

Three things are notable about this blessed man:

1. His company. He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2. His reading and thinking. His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3. His fruitfulness. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The river is the Holy Spirit; the planting, the deep abiding life in which, not occasionally but habitually, we absorb Him. The fruit is not once in a while, but continual and appropriate to each changing season. His life is also prosperous and his spirit fresh, like the unfading leaf. Such a life must be happy.

Indeed, happiness is a matter of spiritual conditions. Put a sunbeam in a cellar and it must be bright. Put a nightingale in the darkest midnight, and it must sing.

Casting all your care upon him

There are some things that God will not tolerate in us. We must leave them. Nehemiah would not talk with Sanballat about his charges and fears. He simply refused to have anything to do with the matter-even to take refuge in the temple to pray about it. How very few things we really have to do with in life. If we would only drop all the needless things and simply do the things that absolutely require our attention from morning till night, we would find what a small slender thread life is. But we string upon it a thousand imaginary beads and burden ourselves with cares and flurries that-if we had trusted more-would never have needed to preoccupy us.

Wise indeed was the testimony of the dear old saint who said, in review of her past life, "I have had a great many troubles in my life, especially those that never came." Trust and rest with heart abiding, Like a birdling in its nest, Underneath His feathers hiding, Fold thy wings and trust and rest. Trust and rest, trust and rest, God is working for the best.

Delight thyself also in the Lord

Daniel's heart was filled with God's love for His work and kingdom, and his prayers were the mightiest forces of his time. Through them God gave to him the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the acknowledgment by the rulers of the world of the God of whom he testified and for whom he lived. There is a beautiful promise in Psalm 37:

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart (v.4).

It is, perhaps, legitimate to translate this as meaning not only the fulfillment of our desires, but even the inspiration of our desires, the inbreathing of His thoughts into us so that our prayers shall be in accord with His will and bring back to us the unfailing answer of His mighty providence.

Teach me Thy thoughts, O God! Think Thou, Thyself, in me; Then shall I only always think Thine own thoughts after Thee. Teach me Thy thoughts, O God! Show me Thy plan divine; Save me from all my plans and works, And lead me into Thine.

The battle is not yours

The thing is to count the battle God's. The battle is not yours but God's. We shall not need to fight in this battle. As long as we count our dangers and responsibilities, we shall be distracted with fear.

But when we realize God is bound to take care of us as His property and His representatives, we shall feel infinite relief and security. If I send my employee on a long journey, I am responsible for his expenses and protection; if God sends me anywhere, He is responsible. If we belong to God and put our life, our family, and our all in His hands, we may know He will take care of us.

If our body belongs to God, it is His interest to keep us well, just as much as it is for the interest of the shepherd to have his sheep well fed, well cared for and a credit to him.

Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Stand in His strength alone; The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own.

The Death of Self

"Not I, but Christ."

The story of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac is a parable, illustrating this text. The casting out of Ishmael is most clearly declared in this very epistle to be an allegory setting forth the spiritual experience of the believer when he dies to the law and sin through the cross of Jesus Christ, and comes into the resurrection life of his Risen Lord.

But there is something more than the experience of Ishmael and our deliverance from the power of indwelling sin. In the patriarchal story, this was followed by the offering up of Isaac on Mount Moriah, and there can be no doubt that this sets forth the deeper spiritual experience into which the fully consecrated heart must come, when even the sanctified self is laid upon the altar like Isaac upon the mount, and we become dead henceforth, not only to sin, but to that which is worse than sin, even self.

There is a foe whose hidden power

The Christian well may fear;

More subtle far than inbred sin

And to the heart more dear.

It is the power of selfishness,

The proud and wilful I;

And ere my Lord can live in me,

My very self must die.

This is the lesson of Isaac's offering and Paul's experience. "I have been crucified with Christ," that is the death of sin; "nevertheless I live," that is the new life in the power of His resurrection; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," that is the offering of Isaac, the deliverance from self, and the substitution of Christ Himself for even the new self; a substitution so complete that even the faith by which this life is maintained is no longer our self-sustained confidence but the very "faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me, that is, instead of me, and as my Substitute.

I. THE FORMS OF SELF.

We read in the book of Joshua of the three sons of Anak, who formed the Anakim, the race of giants who held the city of Hebron before Caleb's conquest, and were the terror of the Israelites. Literally Anak means long-necked, and represents pride, confidence, willfulness, and self-sufficiency. The first of the Anakim may be called,

Self-will, the disposition to rule, and especially to rule ourselves; the spirit that brooks no other will and is its own law and god. Therefore the first step in the consecrated life is unconditional surrender. This is indispensable to break the power of self at the centre, and to establish forever the absolute sovereignty of the will of God in the heart and life of the Christian. We cannot abide in holiness and we cannot be wholly used for God until self-will is so utterly crucified that we could not even think for an instant of acting contrary to His will or without His orders.

This is obedience, and obedience is the law of the Christian life and must be absolute, unquestioning, and without any possible

exception. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

It is true that God requires of us in the life of faith the exercise of a very strong will continually, and there is no doubt that faith itself is largely the exercise of a sanctified and intensified will, but in order to this it is necessary that our will be wholly renounced and God's will invariably accepted instead, and then we can put into it all the strength and force of our being, and will it even as God wills it, and because He wills it.

In short, it is an exchanged will; the despotic tyranny of Anak exchanged for the wise, beneficent yet still more absolute sovereignty of God.

Self-confidence is the next of Anak's race. It is the spirit that draws its strength from self alone and disdains the arm of God and the help of His grace. In a milder form it is the spirit that trusts its own spiritual graces or virtues, its morality perhaps, its courage, its faith, its purity, its steadfastness, its joy, and its transitory emotions of hope, enthusiasm, or zeal. It is just as necessary to die to our self-sufficiency as to our self-will.

If we do not we shall have many a fall and failure until we learn, with the most triumphant and successful laborer that ever followed the footsteps of his Lord, that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." The sanctified heart is not a self-constituted engine of power, but is just a set of wheels and pulleys that are absolutely dependent upon the great central engine whose force is necessary continually to move them.

It is just a capacity to hold God; just a vessel to be filled with His goodness, held and used by His hand; just a possibility of which He, in His abiding life, is constantly the motive power and impelling force. The word "consecrate" in Hebrew means "to fill the hand," and beautifully suggests the idea of an empty hand

which God Himself must continually fill.

Self-glorying is the last and most impious of these Canaanitish tribes. He takes the very throne of Jehovah and claims the glory due unto Him alone. Sometimes it is a desire for human praise.

Sometimes it is more subtle, the pride so proud that it will not stoop to care for the approval of others, and its supreme delight is in its own self-consciousness and superiority, ability or goodness.

Metaphysicians have sometimes made this happy distinction, that vanity is an inferior vice to pride. Vanity only seeks the praise of others, but pride disdains the opinions of others and rests back in the complacent consciousness of its own excellency. Whatever its phase may be, the root and principle is the same. It is impious self, sitting on the throne of God, and claiming the honor and glory that belong to Him alone.

These three forms of self are illustrated by three very solemn examples in the word of God. Saul the first king of Israel is a fearful monument of the peril of self-will. His downward career began in a single act of disobedience, a disobedience which seemed to have respect to a mere question of detail, but which was really an act of self-will, a substitution of his choice for God's express command.

The prophet Samuel characterizes his sin in these very expressive words, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (or devil worship), and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." It is evident from these words that the very essence of Saul's sin lay in this element of willfulness and stubbornness which had dared to substitute his own ideas and preferences for the word of Jehovah.

From this moment his obedience was necessarily qualified and of course worthless, and God sent His prophet to choose another king, who, although full of human imperfections, had this one thing on which God could fully depend, namely, a purpose to obey God when he fully understood His will.

Therefore God calls David "a man after my own heart who shall perform all my will." David made many mistakes and committed many dark and terrible sins, but they were when under strong temptation and when blinded by passion and haste, but never with the purpose of disobeying God, or, at the time, with the consciousness that he was transgressing.

The sad, sad story of Saul's downward descent and final and tragic ruin should be enough to make us tremble at the peril which lies before the willful soul, and to lead us to cry, "Not my will but thine be done."

We have just as marked an instance of the peril of self-confidence in Simon Peter. Strong in his transitory enthusiasm, and ignorant of the real weakness of his own heart, he honestly meant what he said, when he exclaimed, "Though all men should deny thee yet will I never deny thee." But alas! the shameful denial, the upbraiding look of Jesus, the bitter tears of penitence and the sad days of the crucifixion that followed had to teach him the lesson of his nothingness, and the necessity of walking henceforth with downward head in the strength of the Lord alone.

We are not left without as vivid and impressive an object lesson of the last form of self-will-the pride that glories in its own achievements or excellencies. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" cries Nebuchadnezzar, in the hour of his triumph, as he looks upon that splendid city, which was indeed a paragon of human glory, and surveys in his imagination the mightier empire of which it was the metropolis, an empire which literally comprised the world.

If mortal could ever have cause to glory in earthly magnificence, Nebuchadnezzar had, for God Himself had compared him and his kingdom to a majestic head of gold and had symbolized his power under the figure of a winged lion, combining the majesty and sovereignty of the eagle and the lion in one splendid image. But the very instant that vain-glorious word reached the ears of God, the answer fell from heaven like a knell of judgment, "The kingdom is departed from thee.

And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." This is the glorying of the carnal heart, but even the follower of God may mingle his own self-seeking and his own honor with his work for God and thus impair his usefulness and lose his own recompense.

There is not a more pitiful picture in the long panorama of the Bible than that morbid and grumbling prophet, sitting outside the gates of Nineveh under a withered gourd, his face blistered and swollen with the scorching sun and his eyes red with useless weeping; asking God that he might die, because his ministry had been dishonored; and presenting a spectacle of ridiculous melancholy and chagrin while all around him millions were rejoicing and praising God for the mercy which had just delivered them from an awful catastrophe.

Poor Jonah! God had given him the most honorable ministry ever yet accorded to a human being. The first foreign missionary, he had been sent to preach to the mightiest empire on the face of the globe and the imperial city of the world, proud Nineveh! His preaching had been successful as no mortal ever had succeeded. The whole city was lying prostrate on their faces at the footstool of mercy in penitence and prayer through his words, and the nation's heart, for a moment at least, was turned to God.

And yet so full of himself had all his work been, so utterly was he

absorbed in his own credit, reputation and honor, that when God listened to the penitent cries of the Ninevites and revoked the sentence which Jonah himself had uttered, and rendered his prophecy null and void, so that instead of his word coming to pass he himself would probably be afterwards ridiculed as a fanatic and idle alarmist, poor Jonah became disgusted and exasperated and like a petted child went out and threw himself upon his face on the ground and asked God to kill him, just because He had by His mercy spoiled his reputation as a true prophet.

He could not see, as God did, the unspeakable horror and anguish that had been averted. He could not see the joy of the divine heart in exercising mercy and in hearing the penitent cries of the people. He could not see the great principle of grace which underlies the divine threatenings.

He could not see that great-souled pity, that felt for the one hundred and twenty thousand infant children of the great capital, or the dumb brutes, which would have moaned in their dying agony, if Nineveh had fallen.

All he could see was Jonah's reputation as a true prophet or what people might say when they found that his word had not come to pass; and with that one little worm gnawing at the root, his peace and happiness, like his own gourd, withered away, and God had to set him up as a sort of dried specimen of selfishness, to show the meanness and misery of the self-life that mingles its own glory with the sacred work of the glorious God, and which, ever since the days of Jonah, has rendered it impossible for God to use many a gifted man, and has blighted the church of Christ and rendered vain the ministry of thousands because God could not use them without giving to men the glory which He will never give to another.

God had tried to kill Jonah before He sent him to Nineveh, for He knew the secret bane of his heart, and so He immersed him for

three days and nights in the sea and buried him in the bowels of a whale; but out of that Jonah came, as a great many other people come out of the experience of sanctification with a big self, supreme even in the sin-cleansed soul.

Oh let us lift up the heart-felt prayer,

O to be saved from myself, dear Lord,

O to be lost in Thee!

O that it may be no more!

But Christ that lives in me!

II. THE EFFECTS OF SELF.

It dishonors God and sets up a rival on His throne. The devil was not altogether a liar when he said to our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods." This is just what fallen man tries to be, a god unto himself. This is the essence of the sin of selfishness, that it puts man in the place of God by making him a law and an end unto himself.

Whenever, any person acts, either because it is his own selfish will, or for his own self-interest, purely as an end, he is claiming to be his own god and directly disobeying the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me."

Moreover, in assuming the place of God, he is doing it in a spirit the very opposite of God's, for God is love, and love is the very opposite of selfishness. He is thus mimicking God and proving, at the same time, his utter unfitness to occupy His throne by his unlikeness to Him.

It leads to every other sin and brings back the whole power of the carnal nature. For while self alone attempts to keep the heart it finds sin and Satan too strong. A self-perfection is not possible for any man. There must be more than "I" before there can be victory. In the seventh of Romans the apostle tells us what "I, myself" can do and that is, ineffectually struggle. In the eighth it is what "Christ in me" can do, and that is victory and everlasting love.

The man or woman who only goes so far as to receive Adamic purity, if such a thing be included in the Gospel at all, will soon have the next chapter of Adamic history, and that is the temptation and fall. But the man who receives Christ to dwell within and keep the heart by His mighty power, shall rise "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The self-life leads back to the dominion of Satan. Satan's own fall began probably in a form of self-love. Made to be dependent on God every moment, probably he became independent; and contemplating his own perfection, and thinking it was something that was his own, he became separated from God, and then inevitably fell into rebellion against Him and eternal rivalry, disobedience and all that can be the opposite of the divine and the holy. And so still, any soul that becomes self-constituted or occupied with its own virtues, and tries to be independent of Jesus, either as the source of its strength or the supreme end of its being, will fall under the power of Satan and share his awful descent.

Where can we find a sadder illustration of the end of self than in the story of Saul? He began with Saul and ended with Satan. The first chapter is self-will, the last is the awful night at Endor and the bloody day of death and ruin on Mount Gilboa.

It is fatal to the spirit of love and harmony. It is the opposite of love and the source of strife, bigotry, suspicion, sectarianism, envy, jealousy and the whole race of social sins and grievances

that afflict the Christian life and the church of God. It is the mother of the strifes and sectarianisms of the church from the very beginning.

Where it prevails there can be no true unity, no happy co-operation. You never can have a harmonious church or a happy family where self is predominant in the hearts of the people. The very secret of Christian co-operation and happy church life is "forbearing one another in love," endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, "in honor preferring one another."

It mars our work for God. Self-will will try to force the chariots of God's power and grace upon our own side-tracks, and that God will never permit. Self-confidence will seek to build up the kingdom of Christ by human means and unsanctified instrumentalities, and presume to go where God has not sent and to do what God has not qualified us by His Holy Spirit to do. The result is, it is but crude work, defiled by worldliness and sin, impermanent and unfruitful, as much of the Christian work of today is, in all the churches of Christ.

And above all others, the spirit of self-glorying will try to use the pulpit, the organ gallery, the subscription books, the religious paper, the charitable scheme, the very mission for winning souls, as a channel for developing some brilliant character, or to glorify some rich man or woman, or minister to the spiritual self-sufficiency of some successful worker; and God is disgusted with the spirit of idolatry, and His Holy Spirit turns away grieved for the honor of Jesus. Until we are so yielded to our Master that He and He alone can be glorified in our work, the Lord cannot trust us with much service for Him or it will simply become the pinnacle of the temple from which the devil will hurl us down.

Self makes us unhappy. It is a root of bitterness in every heart where it reigns. The secret of joy is hidden in the bosom of love, and the arms of self are too short ever to reach it. Not until we dwell in God and God in us, and learn to find our happiness in

being lost in Him and living for His glory and for His people, shall we ever know the sweets of divine blessedness. All the world cannot fill this hungry heart.

All our spiritual treasures only corrupt if we hoard them for ourselves. Only water that runs is living water. And only when it is poured into other empty vessels does it become wine. The self-willed man is always a miserable man. He gets his own way and does not enjoy it, and wishes after he has had it, that he had never got it, for it usually leads him over a precipice.

The self-sufficient man can never know the springs which lie outside his own little heart, and the self-glorying man, like poor Herod, is eaten of the worms of corruption and remorse with which God always feeds the impious soul that dares to claim the honors due to Him alone.

Self-love always leads to a fall. The boasted wisdom must be proved to be foolishness. The proud arm must be laid, like Pharaoh's, in the dust. The self-sufficient boast, like Peter's, must be answered by his own failure. The disobedient path which refuses God's wise and holy will, must be proved to be a false way.

Every idol must be abolished, every high thing brought low, and no flesh glory in His presence. Oh, beloved, if you are going on in your own will, your own strength, for your own gratification and glory, beware! Thorns lie in your pathway, serpents lurk beneath your feet, yawning abysses, perilous precipices, angry tempests, midnight darkness, many a sorrow, many a tear, many a fall, await you. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death."

Oh, let us ask our faithful God to save us from this tyrant that dishonors God, that leads us into captivity to Satan, that withers love, mars the work of God, poisons all our happiness; and

plunges us into failure and ruin; and so to show us that we are nothing, that we shall be glad to have Christ live in us, our "all in all."

III. THE REMEDY FOR SELF.

God often has to let self have its way until it cures us effectually by showing us the misery and failure which it brings. This is the only good there is in our own struggling, that it shows us the vanity of the struggle and prepares us the more quickly to surrender to God.

And so sometimes even our disobedience is overruled to make us fear to repeat the experiment or to venture again one step beyond our Father's will. Let us beware, however, how we attempt the experiment ourselves, for there is always one step too far ever to return.

God has placed around us the blessed restraints of other hearts and lives as checks upon our selfishness, and links, which almost compel us to reach beyond ourselves and, work with and live for others. He has made no man independent of his brethren. "We are fitly framed together" and so grow into a holy temple in the Lord.

We are adjusted, one to His bone, and, by that which every joint supplieth, the body is ministered unto and groweth into the fullness of His stature. The church of Christ is no autocracy where one man can be a dictator or a judge, but a fellowship where One alone is Master.

Any work which develops into a one-man despotism becomes withered. It is true that God has ranks of workers, but they are all harmonious and linked in heavenly love. The man who cannot work with his brethren in mutual comfort and harmony has something yet to learn in his own Christian life.

True, God does not require us to work with unsanctified men; but there are plenty of sanctified ones, thank God, to-day, where any earnest heart can find a congenial fellowship of service; and while He will teach any of us by ourselves, and wants us to be independent of our brethren in the sense of leaning on them instead of God, yet He does require that we should be able to co-operate with them for God, submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God, one sowing and another reaping, and both rejoicing together, "bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ," "true yoke-fellows." And so by innumerable phrases and figures He has taught us the blessed truth of Christian cooperation in the spirit of self-renunciation and mutual confidence and love.

Let us receive these blessed lessons and helps, and let Him so slay in us the self-asserting "I" that we can be true yoke-fellows, and like David's men, be able to "keep rank" in the great host of God.

The love of Jesus is the divinely appointed prescription for the death of self. Paul expresses it beautifully, "We thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead. And that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again." Many of us have seen at some time a young, beautiful, petted, luxurious and selfish girl, growing up surrounded with wealth, affection, admiration, adulation, until she was wholly spoiled, and became the centre of the circle in which she lived, her whole being perverted by her selfishness.

But we have seen that girl years afterwards, and we would not have known her had we not traced the intermediate steps. She was now a self-denying, loving wife and mother, her whole being devoted to the happiness of that husband whose fortunes she had followed amid poverty, obscurity and separation from all her former friends; sharing his penury, toiling for his comfort, and

nursing as a faithful and loving mother, the little children who had come into her arms, with the love that never wearied, that felt no task too hard, and no work too menial.

What has made all the difference? What has cast out that idol, self, from its throne? Nothing but love. That man has won her heart. He has come in and taken the place that it had occupied; it is cast out and he reigns. That is the simple story of the death of self in the Christian life. It is the love of Jesus that has excluded it, and never, until we become fascinated with His affection, and won in complete captivity to His love, shall we cease to live unto ourselves.

Then, like that girl, we will follow Him anywhere. We will toil and suffer with Him. We will be content without many things that before we thought we must have, because His smile is our sunshine, His presence is our joy, His love, shed abroad in our hearts, is our heaven, and we cannot speak or think of sacrifice or suffering, our heart is so satisfied with Him.

Beloved, if you would die to self you must fall in love with Jesus and let Him become to you the personal reality of Solomon's sweet Song in which the whole heart summers into a land of Beulah and a "Hephzibah" of joy.

But it is not the love of Christ merely that we want; it is the living Christ Himself. Many people have touches of the love of Christ, but He is a Christ away up in heaven. The apostle speaks of something far mightier. It is Christ Himself who lives inside and who is big enough to crowd out and keep out the little "I."

There is no other that can truly lift and keep the heart above the power of self but Jesus, the Mighty Lord, the stronger than the strong man armed, who taketh away his armour wherein he trusted and spoileth all his goods and then takes forever the heart that has given him its goods.

Blessed Christ! He is able not only for sin, sorrow and sickness, put He is able for you and me-able so to be our very life, that moment by moment we shall be conscious that He in us fills us with Himself and conquers the self that ruled before. The more you try to fight a self-thought the more it clings to you. The moment you turn away from it and look to Him, He fills all the consciousness and disperses everything with His own presence. Let us abide in Him, and we shall find there is nothing else to do.

It is almost the same thing, but another way of saying it, that the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Ghost within us will deliver and keep us from the power of self. When the cloud of glory entered the tabernacle there was no room for Moses to remain; and when filled with the heavenly presence of the blessed Spirit we are lost in God and self hides away, and like Job we can say, "Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Beloved, these temples were reared for Him. Let Him fill them so completely that like the oriental temple of glass in the ancient legend, the temple shall not be seen, but only the glorious sunlight, which not only shines into it, but through it, and the transparent walls are all unseen.

It is not a new, but it is an appropriate thought, that all the things that God has used have first been sacrificed. It is a sacrificed Saviour, One who emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation, that God has so highly exalted, and given Him a name that is above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth."

It was a sacrificed Isaac that God made the promised seed and the progenitor of Israel's tribes. And it was on that very Mount Moriah where Isaac was sacrificed, that God afterwards reared His glorious temple. And so it is only when our Isaac is on the altar and our whole being lost in God that He can lay the deep

foundations and rear the everlasting walls of the living temple of which He is the Supreme and eternal glory.

I look back to-day with unutterable gratitude to the lonely and sorrowful night, when, mistaken in many things, and imperfect in all, my heart's first full consecration was made, and not knowing but that it would be death in the most literal sense before the morning light, yet with unreserved surrender I first could say,

**"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my All shalt be."**

Never, perhaps, has my heart known quite such a thrill of joy as when the following Sabbath morning I gave out those lines and sung them with all my heart. And if God has been pleased to make my life in any measure a little temple for His indwelling and for His glory, and if He ever shall be pleased to use me in any fuller measure, it has been because of that hour, and it will be still in the measure in which that hour is made the key-note of a consecrated, crucified and Christ-devoted life.

Oh, beloved, come and let Him teach you the superlative degree of joy, the joy that has learned to say not only, "My Beloved is mine," but better even, "I am my Beloved's;" and we shall find as one of our dear missionaries in China used to say, "He is willing to come into the heart of every one of us and love us to death."

Be Carefull for Nothing

Commit means to hand over, to trust wholly to another. So, if we give our trials to Him, He will carry them. If we walk in righteousness He will carry us through. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (I Peter 5:6). There are two hands there-God's hand pressing us down, humbling us, and then God's hand lifting us up. [Cast] all your care upon him; for he careth for you (1 Peter 5:7). There are two cares in this verse-your care and His care. They are different in the original. One means anxious care, the other means Almighty care. Cast your anxious care on Him and take His Almighty care instead.

No longer be overwhelmed by trouble, but believe God is able to sustain you through it. The government is on His shoulder. Believe that if you trust and obey Him and meet His will, He will look after your interests. Simply exchange burdens. Take His yoke upon you, and let Him care for you.

Emblems And Aspects Of The Holy Spirit

The Seven Spirits which are before His Throne.- Rev. 1:4.

This expression denotes the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The number seven is expressive of divine completeness, and the benediction of the seven spirits is equivalent to the ascription of Paul in the first chapter of Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

In keeping with this seven-fold expression of the Spirit's fullness, is the fact that we have seven special emblems of the Holy Spirit given us in the Scriptures, each fitted to emphasize some special phase of His character and work. As the Holy Ghost has no personal and incarnate form like Christ, He has clothed Himself in the robes of symbol, and thus becomes to us more real and vivid in the figures of human speech and earthly imagery.

I

The Dove

1. The earliest symbol of the Holy Spirit is the dove. Not in express terms is this figure introduced in the Old Testament, but the allusion in the opening verses of Genesis is sufficiently clear to be recognized. "The Spirit of God moved upon the deep;" literally this is translated, "The Spirit of God fluttered or brooded upon the face of the deep." It is the picture of the mother-bird spreading her wing over the stormy elements, and incubating, as it were, her brood through the dark night of chaos.

It is the same typical figure that we meet again as the emblem of peace and gentleness, and the herald of the morning of the new world in the dark and stormy night of the deluge. It is the same blessed person, who, on the banks of the Jordan, descended in visible form like a dove, and abode upon the Lord Jesus, the herald of peace and love to a sinful world, and the emblem of the Spirit of Christ's ministry. As the dove, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of peace, the Giver of rest.

This is also a figure of motherhood, which is constantly associated with the picture of the blessed Paraclete. In the Divine Trinity there is found the substance of all relationships, and that which is expressed in human motherhood must always have been in the bosom of God.

Of this the Holy Ghost is the personal expression. From that material breast our new life is born; by that gentle Spirit our spiritual childhood is nurtured, comforted, educated, developed, and matured. "As one who his mother comforteth," so doth the Comforter love and cheer our sorrowing hearts. As the brooding dove, so does this blessed One hide us beneath the wings of God, and cover us with the feathers of the divine sympathy and tenderness.

It is almost difficult to use the masculine form in speaking of this blessed person, so womanlike is the sweetness and softness of His touch.

**His is that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That stills each doubt, and calms each tear,
And speaks to us of heaven.**

II.

Air is the next symbol of the Spirit.

This also appears in the opening chapter of Genesis. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." And this we know was the Holy Spirit, for, we are told, "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth life." "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created."

The same figure is used by the prophet Ezekiel in describing the resurrection of the dry bones. It was the Spirit that came from the four winds and breathed upon the slain, and they lived. Our Lord has used this figure in two very striking connections. The first is in relation to the regeneration of a soul. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whither it cometh or whither

it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

It is like the voiceless wind, known not by visible perception, but by its effects.

Again he uses it in connection with the personal imparting of the Holy Ghost to His own disciples. "He breathed on them and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost."

In keeping with this figure the Hebrew and Greek word is the same as that used for the wind, or the breath. The Holy Ghost is the breath of God. This emblem expresses at once the gentleness and the strength of the Holy Ghost. His coming may be as quiet as the evening zephyr, or mighty as the tempest's power. When He descended on Pentecost, there was a sound as of a mighty rushing wind; when He came afterwards to the assembled disciples, the place was shaken where they were assembled; when He answered the prayer of Paul and Silas the prison rocked to its foundation, and the bolts and bars were loosed.

But above all the manifestations of His tremendous power the most blessed is His quickening breath. This figure especially expresses the idea of life, the Spirit that breathes the new life in conversion, that imparts the very life of Christ to the soul, and quickens the mortal body into His resurrection power.

III.

The water.

This emblem runs through the whole typology of the Old Testament, and the figurative language of the New.

This was the significance of the stream that flowed from Horeb's riven rock, and the diverse washings of the Levitical system. It was of this that Jesus spake when He said, "He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." It was of this that the prophet said, "I will pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." This is

the rain that comes upon the new-mown grass, and the dew which revives the earth. It is the fulness of the Holy Spirit in His cleansing, refreshing, and comforting influences. This is He who comes to us in the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost which He sheds upon us abundantly. This is He who sends the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. This is He who baptizes us in the ocean of divine light and love, and fills us with all the fullness of God.

IV.

The Oil.

The oil is another Old Testament figure of the Holy Ghost, appearing in all the anointings of the priesthood and tabernacle, and reappearing in the very name of Christ, which means the anointed One. It was of this that He said, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for He hath anointed me to preach the gospel. to the poor; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the opening of the eyes to them that are blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

This figure describes the Holy Ghost as the figure of light, consecration, and healing.

In the ancient ritual, the head, hands, and feet of the cleansed leper and the consecrated priest were touched with oil as a symbol of their dedication to God. Thus Aaron was set apart, thus David was consecrated, and thus we are dedicated to Christ, and divinely qualified for service by the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

But the oil was also the figure of light in the vision of Zechariah. The temple is lighted by seven lamps that are fed by two living olive trees, teaching us that the Holy Ghost is the constant and living source of His people's life and light.

It is in this connection that John says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie,

and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

And so, also, the oil speaks of His healing touch. Oil and wine are used in the parable of the good Samaritan as figures of physical restoration.

And so the disciples anointed the sick and commissioned the elders to continue the same rite in the command, James v: 14, as a token of the touch of the Holy Ghost upon the suffering form, and communicating to each the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oil might also be used as a symbol of gladness. The Psalmist speaks of oil which makes our face to shine, and describes Jesus Christ as anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Isaiah speaks of the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The Holy Ghost anoints us with the spirit of joy, and He radiates the face with the reflected glory of the indwelling God.

Have we received the divine anointing as our light and healing, our joy and consecration? The oil that fell on Aaron's head descended to the skirts of his garments; and from our Great High Priest the divine anointing descends to His lowliest member.

Let us consecrate our hands and feet, our head and heart to be touched and dedicated from this holy chrism, and go forth as the Lord's anointed.

V.

The Fire.

The mightiest of human forces is the last figure implied to represent the Holy Spirit up to the time of His descent at Pentecost. It had appeared in the very beginning in the Shekinah which hovered at Eden's gate; the pillar of fire that led the camp of Israel, the descending flame that consumed the sacrifices in the tabernacle, the blaze of the burning bush in Horeb, the coals of fire in Isaiah's vision, the glowing symbols of Ezekiel's imagery, the figurative language of John the Baptist prophesying of Him who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; and at length it was revealed in all its manifested meaning in the

cloven tongues of Pentecost, and the fiery baptism of the assembled disciples.

It is the figure of destruction, reminding us of the Spirit which consumes not only the sin, but also the life of nature, and leaves the soul an empty vessel for the divine filling. It represents also, more emphatically than any other figure, the idea of cleansing; penetrating every fibre of our being, purifying with intrinsic power the inmost soul, and eliminating every particle of dross and evil.

This is also the figure of power, reminding us of the mightiest forces of human mechanics, electricity and steam, which are forms of fire, and the great dynamic center of our system, and fiery sun which holds up the planets in their orbits by his power; so the Holy Ghost is the source of omnipotent power; impelling all the machinery of Christianity, moving all the forces of the soul, and enduing us with all we can ever know of power for service.

The fire is also the image of love; it is the force that melts, dissolves barriers, fuses hard substances, and welds the pieces into one.

And so the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of love, melting the stony heart, dissolving the prejudices of men, and uniting the people of God as one heart. It is His to give the glow of enthusiasm and the fire of holy zeal; it was He who clothed Elijah with his fervor, John with his love, Paul with his tremendous energy, Whitfield with his love of souls, and Fenelon, Rutherford and McChesney with their seraphic piety.

Have we received the baptism of fire? It is the still unexhausted promise of the New Testament, waiting its mightiest manifestations just before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

VI.

The Seal.

Another symbol has been added in the epistles, following with peculiar propriety the complexion of redemption, and the ratifying of the covenant

by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

It is the figure of the seal in the epistles of Paul. This figure is used respecting the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the believer, "In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

And so again He says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit by whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." The covenant completed, the will made effectual; it is fitting that the seal should be added. And this the Holy Spirit becomes, putting upon the heart the distinct stamp of Christ, touching and making divine things real and tangible as the impression upon the seal and the wax. This figure represents the idea of certainty and reality in connection with the work of the Spirit. There is such an experience in the Holy Ghost. It is not enough that we merely believe the truth, we may also know it and experience it. "We have known and believed," John says, "the love that God hath to us," and so the Holy Ghost becomes to us the witness to our consciousness of the reality of Divine things; enabling us to say, "I know Him whom I have believed;" "We know that He abideth in us by the Spirit that He hath given to us;" "We know that we have eternal life;" "We know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

It is very important that we do not reverse the order of this experience; it does not come before faith, but after it. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." we should not rest short of this blessed reality, and if we yield ourselves unto God in the surrender of consecration, and the simplicity of trust, we shall receive the touch of His blessed hand, and the stamp of His own personal presence, and the very image of His blessed face impressed upon our hearts, and be able to say, "He who hath sealed us and anointed us is God, who hath also stablished us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

This leads us to the last symbol of the Spirit, namely:

VII.

The Earnest.

This also is added in the epistles along with the seal, and after the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. These two last symbols seem especially appropriate as added ones, in view of their special significance with respect to the finished redemption of Christ, and His approaching advent. All the other aspects of the Spirit's work have been expressed by former emblems, but there is still one more, namely, the prophetic. "He shall show you things to come;" so Christ promised regarding the Comforter. He was to be the foretaste of all the yet unrevealed and unrealized hopes of the glorious future, and one more term was needed to express this; this is afforded in the word earnest.

An earnest in ancient legal customs was a handful of soil bestowed upon the purchaser of a piece of real estate, containing a portion of the very ground that he had bought, as a solemn pledge of the whole estate which was to be delivered in due time. It was not a handful of soil from any estate, but it was from the very ground that he had bought, and it guaranteed the identity, certainty, and completeness of the transfer in due time.

In this sense the Holy Spirit is to show a simple and pledge of our future inheritance. All that we are to be and to enjoy He brings us now in foretaste and in limited measure, as a pledge that it shall be all delivered in the fullness of time, in all its completeness.

The term is used in a two-fold connection in the epistles; first, of our spiritual inheritance, which the Holy Ghost foreshadows in our hearts by the experience of His sanctifying, comforting, and quickening life; giving us the measure in which we are able to receive amid the limitations of our mortal life, a real foretaste of the felicities and glories of heaven.

But there is a second sense in which He is also an earnest, namely: in our mortal bodies, into which he brings the physical life of Christ as an earnest and foretaste of the physical resurrection. Thus we have the first-fruits of the Spirit as the pledge that we shall yet have the full redemption of the body. "He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing," that is, for the future resurrection, "is God, who hath also given us the earnest of

the Spirit."

Have we received this blessed token, and do we have in our measure all its meaning, in anticipation of the things which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and it hath not entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for them that love Him," but of which it is added, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God?"

Can we claim the benediction of the seven Spirits which are before the throne, and say with the apostle, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all the blessings of the Spirit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus?"

Have thou Authority over Ten Cities

It is not our success in service that counts, but our fidelity. Caleb and Joshua were faithful and God remembered their faithfulness when the day of visitation came. For them it was a very difficult and unpopular position.

For us, too. We are called in the crises of our lives to stand alone. In the very matter of trusting God for victory over sin and our full inheritance in Christ we all have to be tested as they. Even in the Church of God our brethren, while admitting in the abstract the loveliness and advantages of life-in Christ, tell us that it is impracticable and impossible. Many of us have had to stand alone for years witnessing to the power of Christ to save His people to the uttermost.

Like Joshua and Caleb, we have had to follow God alone as we followed Him wholly. But this is the real victory of faith and the proof of our uncompromising fidelity. Let us not, therefore, complain when we suffer reproach for our testimony or stand alone for God. Let us, rather, thank Him that He so honors us and stand the test so that He can afterwards use us when the multitudes are glad to follow.

Oswald Chambers

(1874-1917)

He was an early twentieth-century Scottish Baptist evangelist and teacher. In 1911 Chambers founded and was principal of the Bible Training College in Clapham Common, Greater London. He was the author of the devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*

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After God's Silence - What?

“When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days in the same place where he was.”

John 11:6

Has God trusted you with a silence - a silence that is big with meaning? God's silences are His answers. Think of those days of absolute silence in the home at Bethany! Is there anything analogous to those days in your life? Can God trust you like that, or are you still asking for a visible answer? God will give you the blessings you ask if you will not go any further without them; but His silence is the sign that He is bringing you into a marvellous understanding of Himself. Are you mourning before God because you have not had an audible response? You will find that God has trusted you in the most intimate way possible, with an absolute silence, not of despair, but of pleasure, because He saw that you could stand a bigger revelation. If God has given you a silence, praise Him, He is bringing you into the great run of His purposes. The manifestation of the answer in time is a matter of God's sovereignty. Time is nothing to God. For a while you said - "I asked God to give me bread, and He gave me a stone." He did not, and to-day you find He gave you the bread of life.

A wonderful thing about God's silence is that the contagion of His stillness gets into you and you become perfectly confident - "I know God has heard me." His silence is the proof that He has. As long as you have the idea that God will bless you in answer to prayer, He will do it, but He will never give you the grace of silence. If Jesus Christ is bringing you into the understanding that prayer is for the glorifying of His Father, He will give you the first sign of His intimacy - silence.



All Noble Things Are

“Enter ye in at the strait gate . . because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way...”

Matthew 7:13-14

If we are going to live as disciples of Jesus, we have to remember that all noble things are difficult. The Christian life is gloriously difficult, but the difficulty of it does not make us faint and cave in, it rouses us up to overcome. Do we so appreciate the marvellous salvation of Jesus Christ that we are our utmost for His highest?

God saves men by His sovereign grace through the Atonement of Jesus; He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure; but we have to work out that salvation in practical living. If once we start on the basis of His Redemption to do what He commands, we find that we can do it. If we fail, it is because we have not practised. The crisis will reveal whether we have been practising or not. If we obey the Spirit of God and practise in our physical life what God has put in us by His Spirit, then when the crisis comes, we shall find that our own nature as well as the grace of God will stand by us.

Thank God He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a glad thing, but it is also a heroic, holy thing. It tests us for all we are worth. Jesus is bringing many "sons" unto glory, and God will not shield us from the requirements of a son. God's grace turns out men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not milk sops. It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to live the noble life of a disciple of Jesus in actual things. It is always necessary to make an effort to be noble.



Disposition And Deeds

“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:20

The characteristic of a disciple is not that he does good things, but that he is good in motive because he has been made good by the super-natural grace of God. The only thing that exceeds right-doing is right-being. Jesus Christ came to put into any man who would let Him a new heredity which would exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says - If you are My disciple you must be right not only in your living, but in your motives, in your dreams, in the recesses of your mind. You must be so pure in your motives that God Almighty can see nothing to censure. Who can stand in the Eternal Light of God and have nothing for God to censure? Only the Son of God, and Jesus Christ claims that by His Redemption He can put into any man His own disposition, and make him as unsullied and as simple as a child. The purity which God demands is impossible unless I can be remade within, and that is what Jesus has undertaken to do by His Redemption.

No man can make himself pure by obeying laws. Jesus Christ does not give us rules and regulations; His teachings are truths that can only be interpreted by the disposition He puts in. The great marvel of Jesus Christ's salvation is that He alters heredity. He does not alter human nature; He alters its mainspring.



Discernment Of Faith

**“Faith as a grain of mustard seed...”
Matthew 17:20**

We have the idea that God rewards us for our faith, it may be so in the initial stages; but we do not earn anything by faith, faith brings us into right relationship with God and gives God His opportunity. God has frequently to knock the bottom board out of your experience if you are a saint in order to get you into contact with Himself. God wants you to understand that it is a life of faith, not a life of sentimental enjoyment of His blessings. Your earlier life of faith was narrow and intense, settled around a little sun-spot of experience that had as much of sense as of faith in it, full of light and sweetness; then God withdrew His conscious blessings in order to teach you to walk by faith. You are worth far more to Him now than you were in your days of conscious delight and thrilling testimony.

Faith by its very nature must be tried, and the real trial of faith is not that we find it difficult to trust God, but that God's character has to be cleared in our own minds. Faith in its actual working out has to go through spells of unsyllabled isolation. Never confound the trial of faith with the ordinary discipline of life, much that we call the trial of faith is the inevitable result of being alive. Faith in the Bible is faith in God against everything that contradicts Him - I will remain true to God's character whatever He may do. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" - this is the most sublime utterance of faith in the whole of the Bible.



Recall What God Remembers

**"I remember ... the kindness of thy youth."
Jeremiah 2:2**

Am I as spontaneously kind to God as I used to be, or am I only expecting God to be kind to me? Am I full of the little things that cheer His heart over me, or am I whimpering because things are going hardly with me? There is no joy in the soul that has forgotten what God prizes. It is a great thing to think that Jesus Christ has need of me - "Give Me to drink." How much kindness have I shown Him this past week? Have I been kind to His reputation in my life?

God is saying to His people - You are not in love with Me now, but I remember the time when you were - "I remember...the love of thine espousals." Am I as full of the extravagance of love to Jesus Christ as I was in the beginning, when I went out of my way to prove my devotion to Him? Does He find me recalling the time when I did not care for anything but Himself? Am I there now, or have I become wise over loving Him? Am I so in love with Him that I take no account of where I go? or am I watching for the respect due to me; weighing how much service I ought to give?

If, as I recall what God remembers about me, I find He is not what He used to be to me, let it produce shame and humiliation, because that shame will bring the godly sorrow that works repentance.



Are You Ever Disturbed?

**"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."
John 14:27**

There are times when our peace is based upon ignorance, but when we awaken to the facts of life, inner peace is impossible unless it is received from Jesus. When Our Lord speaks peace, He makes peace, His words are ever "spirit and life." Have I ever received what Jesus speaks? "My peace I give unto you" - it is a peace which comes from looking into His face and realizing His undisturbedness.

Are you painfully disturbed just now, distracted by the waves and billows of God's providential permission, and having, as it were, turned over the boulders of your belief, are you still finding no well of peace or joy or comfort; is all barren? Then look up and receive the undisturbedness of the Lord Jesus.

Reflected peace is the proof that you are right with God because you are at liberty to turn your mind to Him. If you are not right with God, you can never turn your mind anywhere but on yourself. If you allow anything to hide the face of Jesus Christ from you, you are either disturbed or you have a false security.

Are you looking unto Jesus now, in the immediate matter that is pressing and receiving from Him peace? If so, He will be a gracious benediction of peace in and through you. But if you try to worry it out, you obliterate Him and deserve all you get. We get disturbed because we have not been considering Him.

When one confers with Jesus Christ the perplexity goes, because He has no perplexity, and our only concern is to abide in Him. Lay

it all out before Him, and in the face of difficulty, bereavement and sorrow, hear Him say, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Authority And Independence

**"If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments."
John 14:15**

Our Lord never insists upon obedience; He tells us very emphatically what we ought to do, but He never takes means to make us do it. We have to obey Him out of a oneness of spirit. That is why whenever Our Lord talked about discipleship, He prefaced it with an IF - you do not need to unless you like. "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself," let him give up his right to himself to Me.

Our Lord is not talking of eternal positions, but of being of value to Himself in this order of things, that is why He sounds so stern (cf. Luke 14:26). Never interpret these words apart from the One Who uttered them.

The Lord does not give me rules, He makes His standard very clear, and if my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says without any hesitation. If I hesitate, it is because I love some one else in competition with Him, viz., myself.

Jesus Christ will not help me to obey Him, I must obey Him; and when I do obey Him, I fulfil my spiritual destiny. My personal life may be crowded with small petty incidents, altogether unnoticeable and mean; but if I obey Jesus Christ in the haphazard circumstances, they become pinholes through which I see the face of God, and when I stand face to face with God I will discover that through my obedience thousands were blessed.

When once God's Redemption comes to the point of obedience in a human soul, it always creates. If I obey Jesus Christ, the

Redemption of God will rush through me to other lives, because behind the deed of obedience is the Reality of Almighty God.

The Discipline of Hearing

Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops —Matthew 10:27

Sometimes God puts us through the experience and discipline of darkness to teach us to hear and obey Him. Song birds are taught to sing in the dark, and God puts us into “the shadow of His hand” until we learn to hear Him (Isaiah 49:2). “Whatever I tell you in the dark. . .”— pay attention when God puts you into darkness, and keep your mouth closed while you are there. Are you in the dark right now in your circumstances, or in your life with God? If so, then remain quiet. If you open your mouth in the dark, you will speak while in the wrong mood— darkness is the time to listen. Don’t talk to other people about it; don’t read books to find out the reason for the darkness; just listen and obey. If you talk to other people, you cannot hear what God is saying. When you are in the dark, listen, and God will give you a very precious message for someone else once you are back in the light.

After every time of darkness, we should experience a mixture of delight and humiliation. If there is only delight, I question whether we have really heard God at all. We should experience delight for having heard God speak, but mostly humiliation for having taken so long to hear Him! Then we will exclaim, “How slow I have been to listen and understand what God has been telling me!” And yet God has been saying it for days and even weeks. But once you hear Him, He gives you the gift of humiliation, which brings a softness of heart— a gift that will always cause you to listen to God now.

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

None of us lives to himself . . . —Romans 14:7

Has it ever dawned on you that you are responsible spiritually to God for other people? For instance, if I allow any turning away from God in my private life, everyone around me suffers. We “sit together in the heavenly places . . .” (Ephesians 2:6). “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it . . .” (1 Corinthians 12:26). If you allow physical selfishness, mental carelessness, moral insensitivity, or spiritual weakness, everyone in contact with you will suffer. But you ask, “Who is sufficient to be able to live up to such a lofty standard?” “Our sufficiency is from God . . .” and God alone (2 Corinthians 3:5).

“You shall be witnesses to Me . . .” (Acts 1:8). How many of us are willing to spend every bit of our nervous, mental, moral, and spiritual energy for Jesus Christ? That is what God means when He uses the word witness. But it takes time, so be patient with yourself. Why has God left us on the earth? Is it simply to be saved and sanctified? No, it is to be at work in service to Him. Am I willing to be broken bread and poured-out wine for Him? Am I willing to be of no value to this age or this life except for one purpose and one alone— to be used to disciple men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ. My life of service to God is the way I say “thank you” to Him for His inexpressibly wonderful salvation. Remember, it is quite possible for God to set any of us aside if we refuse to be of service to Him — “. . . lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Do You Really Love Him?

She has done a good work for Me —Mark 14:6

If what we call love doesn't take us beyond ourselves, it is not really love. If we have the idea that love is characterized as cautious, wise, sensible, shrewd, and never taken to extremes, we have missed the true meaning. This may describe affection and it may bring us a warm feeling, but it is not a true and accurate description of love.

Have you ever been driven to do something for God not because you felt that it was useful or your duty to do so, or that there was anything in it for you, but simply because you love Him? Have you ever realized that you can give things to God that are of value to Him? Or are you just sitting around daydreaming about the greatness of His redemption, while neglecting all the things you could be doing for Him? I'm not referring to works which could be regarded as divine and miraculous, but ordinary, simple human things— things which would be evidence to God that you are totally surrendered to Him. Have you ever created what Mary of Bethany created in the heart of the Lord Jesus? "She has done a good work for Me."

There are times when it seems as if God watches to see if we will give Him even small gifts of surrender, just to show how genuine our love is for Him. To be surrendered to God is of more value than our personal holiness. Concern over our personal holiness causes us to focus our eyes on ourselves, and we become overly concerned about the way we walk and talk and look, out of fear of offending God. "... but perfect love casts out fear . . ." once we are surrendered to God (1 John 4:18). We should quit asking ourselves, "Am I of any use?" and accept the truth that we really are not of much use to Him. The issue is never of being of use, but of being of value to God Himself. Once we are totally surrendered to God, He will work through us all the time.



Dr. J. Vernon McGee

(1904 – 1988)

He was born in Texas. He graduated with his B.D. from Columbia Theological Seminary and his Th.M. and Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He was the pastor of the Church of the Open Door from 1949 to 1970. In 1967, he began the Thru the Bible Radio Network program.

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The attitude of Prayer

And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18:1)

The seventeenth chapter of Luke ends with a discourse on the last days and the fact that Jesus would be coming again. And He likened the last days to the days of Noah, that they would be difficult days — days that would not be conducive to faith. So now He talks to them about a life of faith in days that are devoid of faith. That is the reason it is so pertinent for this hour. We are living in days, as He indicated, when men's hearts are failing them for fear. What we have in the first parable of Luke 18 is a pertinent paragraph on prayer for the present hour. Notice that He says He spoke a parable to them to this end; that is, for this purpose, that men should always pray, and not to faint.

He opens two alternatives to any man who is living in difficult days. You and I will have to do one of the two. You will have to make up your mind which you are going to do. Men in difficult days will either faint or they will pray. Either there will be days of fear or days of faith.

During World War II, when the bombing was so intense on the city of London, a sign appeared in front of one of the churches in London that read, "If your knees knock together, kneel on them!" That is practically a restatement of what our Lord has said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

It is the same thought that Paul put a little differently, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean you are to go to an all-day or all-night prayer meeting. Prayer is an attitude of the life. It is more an attitude of life than an action of the lips. Remember that Paul said to the Romans, "...the Spirit

itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). That is, they cannot be put into our words. And many times we do not have the words to pray, but we are praying nonetheless. And it is the entire life that is behind the words which are spoken that makes prayer effective.

There was a famous preacher, years ago in the state of Georgia, who had many very unusual expressions. One of them was this, "When a man prays for a corn crop, God expects him to say Amen with a hoe." You can't just stay on your knees all the time and pray for a corn crop. That's pious nonsense. But to pray for the corn crop and then go to work is the thing our Lord is talking about in days when men's hearts are failing them. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

—From Edited Messages on Luke by J. Vernon McGee

Heavenly Chastisement

Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. (Job 33:16,17)

Oh, the proud heart of man! Because we are sinners, pride creeps into our lives. But God "withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous..." (Job 36:7). We are in His hands, and we are under His eye continually. We are the objects of His deep and tender and unchanging love, but we are also the subject of His wise and moral government. He doesn't want spoiled brats as His children! God often instructs men through discipline.

Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak. If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee. If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom. (Job 33:31-33)

God still wants to do the same thing for believers today. There are three distinct ways in which we may meet the chastening of our Heavenly Father: (1) We can despise it as though His hand and His voice were not in it. We can ignore God. (2) We may faint under it. When we do that, it is real defeat. But what are we to do? (3) We are to be exercised by it so that it will produce the fruit of righteousness in our lives. God does permit trouble to come to His own, and He chastens every son whom He receives.

We need to recognize that God moves in our lives as believers. We get occupied with men and things and circumstances, and we look at them in reference to our lives instead of walking with God. We do not live above our circumstances but under them, and then our circumstances weigh us down. When we let circumstances come between us and God, God is shut out, and as a result of that

we lose the sense of His presence. We get to the place where there is worry and distress instead of peace in our souls, and we do not feel His fatherly hand upon us. We become fretful and impatient and irritable and faultfinding. We get far away from God and out of communion with Him. We do not see the hand of God in all our circumstances. All the while He wants to bring us back to Himself in brokenness of heart and humbleness of mind. This is the "end of the Lord," that for which He is striving in your life and in mine.

—From Edited Messages on Job by Dr. J. Vernon McGee

God created!

This is one of the great statements of the Word of God. I cannot conceive of anything quite as wonderful as this. What does it mean? Well, man is like God, I think, as a trinity. Immediately someone is going to say, "Oh, I know what you mean. Man is physically, mentally, and spiritually a being." Yes, I believe that is true. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, says that very thing: "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Although this is true, it actually means more than that. I think that it refers to the fact that man is a personality — he is self-conscious, and he is one who makes his own decisions. He is a free moral agent. Apparently that is the thing which is unique about mankind. I believe this is what is meant by God creating man in His own image.

"Male and female created he them." These verses do not give to us the details of how man was created and how woman was created. We won't find that until we come to the second chapter. That is the reason that I say that God did not intend to give us the details concerning the creation of this great universe that we are in or He would have given us another chapter relative to that. But He offers no explanation other than He is the Creator. This puts us right back to the all-important truth which we find in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

Things we see today were made out of things which did not even exist before. The creation was made ex nihilo, out of nothing. Somebody says, "Explain that." My friend, I can't explain it. And evolution doesn't explain it either. Evolution has never answered

the question of how nothing becomes something. It always starts with a little amoeba or a garbage can or a little piece of seaweed or an animal up in a tree. Our minds must have something to start with, but the Bible starts with nothing. God created! This is the tremendous revelation of this chapter.

—From Edited Messages on Genesis by J. Vernon McGee

Wonderful peace

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

The peace Paul is talking about, which he lists as the first benefit of salvation, is “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the peace that comes to the soul of one who has trusted Christ as Savior and knows that God no longer has any charge against him, that he is no longer guilty. He knows that God, who had to be against him in the past, is now for him. He knows that he has a salvation that is permanent and eternal. This is the peace that comes because of sins forgiven and because everything is right between you and God. You will notice that Paul mentions again and again that we have peace through the blood of Jesus Christ, which means that everything is all right between our soul and God. That is wonderful peace!

This was explained to me by a pastor when I was a young boy in my teens. He said that when man sinned in the Garden of Eden, not only did man run away from God — and found himself alienated from the life of God, with no capacity for God and no inclination to turn to Him — but God also had to turn away from man. Then when Christ died on the cross, God turned around, so that now a holy God can say to a lost sinner, “Come.” His arms are outstretched. He says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will rest you” (Matthew 11:28, literal translation mine). This is peace, the rest of redemption.

My friend, God is reconciled. You don’t have to do anything to reconcile Him. A great many people think that you have to shed tears to reconcile God. You don’t need tears to soften the heart of God! You don’t have to do anything. Because Christ died on the cross, God is reconciled today. The message of the gospel is, “Be

ye reconciled to God.” The next move is yours. When you accept His salvation, then you experience peace that your sins have been forgiven.

—From Edited Messages on Romans by J. Vernon McGee

Manna from Heaven

The children of Israel left Mount Sinai and marched to Kadesh. When problems arose, the people fell to murmuring. “And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp” (Numbers 11:1). Every time the people complained, the glory of the Lord appeared. He was displeased with their groaning and complaining.

We can be sure that the Lord is displeased with many of the criticizing, complaining saints today. They are everlastingly finding fault and nothing seems to please them. God doesn’t want it that way for you, my friend. He wants you to be a happy, joyful Christian.

Out there in the wilderness, what do you think they wanted? “We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely...but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes” (11:5, 6). They couldn’t catch fish out in that wilderness — there weren’t any lakes. I’m of the opinion that in Egypt they were tired of the fish, but now that is what they remembered.

So they start to complain about the manna. It is miraculously provided by God every day, but they don’t like it. It was God’s food; it gave them complete nourishment. Manna, of course, is a picture of the Lord Jesus and the Word of God which reveals Him.

Let’s not sit back and say how terrible the children of Israel were. How about you, my friend? That manna speaks of Christ. How do you feel about Him? Do you get tired of Him? Many Christians get tired of manna. A lot of people get tired of Bible study. I think it is

safe to say that the largest segment of the church today does not want Bible study. The predicament of the church today is due to the fact that folk have turned from the Word and are trying to feed somewhere else other than on the manna which God has provided.

—From Edited Messages on Genesis by J. Vernon McGee

Every Knee Shall Bow

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:4)

The Book of Revelation is Christocentric, that is, Christ-centered. Don't let the four horsemen carry you away, or don't be distracted by the blowing of the trumpets or by the seven performers. And don't let your interest center on these bowls of wrath. Let's keep our eyes centered on Christ. He is in charge; He is the Lord.

In this book we have the unveiling of Jesus Christ in His holiness, in His power, and in His glory. The Man Christ Jesus is wonderful! He is the One who can put His hand in the hand of God and who can put His other hand in the hand of man and bring them together. He can do this because He is God.

"King of the ages" has two other renderings: King of saints and King of the nations. Any rendering indicates that Christ will be the object of universal worship and acknowledgment. There will be no place where He will not be worshiped.

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" In our day there is very little reverential fear of God, even among believers. We have been caught up in this love attitude, and I don't think we should lose sight of the fact that God is love. But God is also light, which means He is holy. God is moving in on churches and dealing with Christians as I have never seen Him do before.

If you are God's child, you had better not do as you please. If you think God would mind sending you a little trouble, you are wrong. God is to be feared. Our God is a holy God.

“Nations shall come and worship before thee.” The day will come when nations will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not true of nations today. We are not living in a Christian nation, but there will come a day when every nation will worship Him.

This knowledge should cause us to take heart as we see our own nation moving in the wrong direction. The day will come when God will remove the rebellious men and leave only those who will worship Him.

In Psalm 2:8 we read, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [nations] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

The nations are going to be His. And in Isaiah 11:9: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” In that day there will be no need for our Thru the Bible study because all men are going to have a knowledge of God.

In Jeremiah 23:5 we are told, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

In Philippians 2:9-11 we read this: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Those who are in hell will not acknowledge Him as their Redeemer, but they are going to acknowledge that He is the boss, He is running the universe, and it belongs to Him. And they are

going to acknowledge the glory of God — they will have to do that.

“For thy righteous acts were made manifest.” This testimony, coming from witnesses of this period, is inexpressibly impressive and should settle in the minds of believers the fact that God is right in all that He does. What God is doing may not look right to you, but if you don’t think God is doing the right thing, you are wrong, not God. We need to adjust our attitudes and our thinking.

Alone with God

And I Daniel alone saw the vision [of the postincarnate Christ]: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. (Daniel 10:7)

Although others were with him, "Daniel alone" saw the vision. It is evident from many recorded incidents that only the Holy Spirit can identify Christ for men, and that is what he did for Daniel. The Lord Jesus said,

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:14)

The apostle Paul had a similar experience on the road to Damascus:

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. (Acts 9:7,8)

Paul was blinded-he had seen the glorified Christ.

Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. (Daniel 10:8)

Daniel was left alone. That is the marvelous, wonderful experience of the man of God, and many have shared eagerly and joyfully a like experience.

Abraham left Ur, and finally his kindred, and he was alone with God

- **Moses was sent to the backside of the desert of Midian, and at the burning bush he was alone with God**

- **Elijah was disciplined by the Brook Cherith, and God was with him.**

Jeremiah walked a lonely path, but God was with him.

John the Baptist was in the desert alone, but God was there.

Paul had two years of solitary confinement on that same desert- that was God's opportunity to train him.

The apostle John was exiled on the lonely isle of Patmos. But God was with him.

There are so many people who want to get together to have a great prayer meeting or other great gatherings. Friend, have you ever tried being alone? That is where God will meet with you. Take the Word of God and go off alone with Him. It will do you a lot of good.

Life in the Heavenlies

The Lord Jesus Christ came to this world all the way from heaven. He was the absolutely sinless One. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

He came down here to save sinners. He came down from heaven, but He didn't go to the mountaintop. There are no people there — He couldn't find any man on that plane of holiness. They are all in the valley; they are all dead in trespasses and sins. So what did He do? He came down into the valley. He came down into the place of death where all men are. "And that he died for all..." (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Because men were dead, He went down into death, and now He brings believers up with Him in resurrection life. Does He take them back up to the mountaintop? No, He takes them with Him into the heavenlies. We who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are now seated in the heavenlies. He has "...raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

He took our place, for "if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Corinthians 5:14). And those who believe on Him are risen with Him. They are not risen so they can be put back on the mountaintop and come tumbling down again. No, He takes them all the way up to the heavenlies.

Christ took our place, and if we are going to live, it is going to be by faith in Him — that those through faith "should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). Christ died, not only that we should be delivered from death and judgment, but also that we should be brought up from our state of death into newness of life. Now our lives should be devoted to Him that we should live henceforth to the glory of God

(From Edited Messages on 2 Corinthians by Dr. J. Vernon McGee)



The Root of Rebellion

Now Korah...took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? (Numbers 16:1-3)

Korah was a Levite of great authority. Associated with him were 250 of the princes of the assembly who were also men of authority. This rebellion was no small affair. These are men of ability and, as always, they appeal to the mob by making charges. Now, actually, the charges made in this rebellion were not true to the facts. They were absolutely unfounded. Moses was not taking too much upon himself. If we go back in his history, we find that when God called him, he refused. He didn't feel capable of leading these people. Even after God had trained him in the wilderness, he didn't want the job. He asked for a helper, and God gave him Aaron. Moses was the meekest man on earth. When Joshua wanted to silence the prophets, Moses said that he wished all of God's people might prophesy. He didn't have a jealous bone in his body. My friend, we have seen that Moses was not sinless, but he certainly was not guilty of taking too much upon himself.

What was really the root trouble here? It was the jealousy of Korah. This matter of jealousy is an awful thing. All authority is God-given. No man takes this honor upon himself. God had given the places in the camp, and He had given the Levites their specific jobs to do. Korah was a Kohathite, and their position and service were God-appointed. Moses had his position and duties.

This is so important for us to see today. My experience is that a great deal of the problem in churches today and a great deal of rebellion among the people in the churches can be found rooted in one thing — jealousy! This is why the Bible enjoins us to walk in meekness and in lowliness of mind.

We are to walk in humility. We are to recognize that all authority is God-given.

If you are a Christian, you have been given a gift, and you are to use that gift as you function in the body of believers. Your business is not to try to get someone else's office or job. We have too much insane vanity among Christians wanting to be chairman of a board or to do something publicly. My friend, most of the members of the body are not seen. We cover them or they are inside the body. Yet their function is essential to the body. It is just so in the church!

Jealousy motivates a great many people who are troublemakers in our churches. That is hurting the church today. God is going to deal with this rebellion in a definite way. I tell you, the judgment of these men is going to be serious.

—From Edited Messages on Numbers by J. Vernon McGee

Who Is in the Driver's Seat?

A great many saints today have pride of race, pride of face, and pride of grace — they are even proud they have been saved by grace! My friend, your salvation ought not to make you proud, it is not even something to brag about. It is something about which to glorify God, and it is something that should humble you. Aren't you ashamed of yourself that you have to be saved by grace because you are such a miserable sinner? I wish I had something to offer God for salvation, but I have nothing. Therefore, I must be saved by grace, and I cannot even boast of that.

Pride is that which is destroying the testimony of many Christians and has made them very ineffective for God. They go in for show, but the thing they are building is a big haystack. They are not building on the foundation of Christ with gold and silver and precious stones. Pride has a great many saints down for the count of ten; it has pinned the shoulders of many to the mat today.

What is pride? Pride of heart is the attitude of a life that declares its ability to live without God. We find in the Book of Obadiah that pride of heart had lifted up the nation of Edom just like Esau who had despised his birthright. Even in the home of Isaac, where there was plenty to eat, he liked that bowl of soup, and he liked it more than he liked his birthright. He didn't care for God at all. In despising that birthright, he despised God. And now Esau had become a great nation that had declared its ability to live without God.

“Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?” (Obadiah 3). They dwelt “in the clefts of the rock.” They were living in great buildings which were hewn out of solid rock inside this great canyon and up and down the sides of it. They were perfectly secure — at least they thought they were. The Edomites had signed a declaration of independence. They had a false sense of security and had severed all relationship with God. They had seceded from the government of God. They had revolted and rebelled against Him.

Now what is God going to do in a case like this? “Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Obadiah 4). The eagle is used in Scripture as a symbol of deity. The Edomites were going to overthrow God as Satan had attempted to do, and they were going to become deity. They were going to handle the business that God was supposed to handle. “And though thou set thy nest among the stars” — this was the sin of Satan, for he sought to exalt his throne above the stars. God says, “Thence will I bring thee down.”

How many people today are attempting to run their lives as if they were God? They feel that they don’t need God, and they live without Him. The interesting thing is that when God made us He did not put a steering wheel on any of us. Why? Because He wants to guide our lives. He wants us to come to Him for salvation first, and then He wants to take charge of our lives. When you and I run our lives, we are in the place of God.

We are in the driver’s seat. We are the ones who are the captains of our own little ships or our own little planes, and we are going through the water or the air just to suit ourselves. That is pride, and anyone who reaches that position, if he continues in it, is committing a sin which is fatal because it means he will go into a lost eternity.

—From Edited Messages on Obadiah by J. Vernon McGee

Henry Law

(1797 - 1884)

Henry Law was a prominent figure in the evangelical Church of England in the early nineteenth century. A prolific practical teacher of the Scripture who wrote his well known commentaries on the Psalms along with other great works.

1. Psalm 1
2. Psalm 10
3. Psalm 11
4. Psalm 23
5. Psalm 51
6. Psalm 90
7. Psalm 91
8. Psalm 103
9. Psalm 119
10. Psalm 121
11. Psalm 127
12. Psalm 130



Psalm 1

Here two portraits are presented to our view. The godly man appears. His walk is holy, happy, fruitful, prosperous, heavenward—The ungodly is entirely diverse. His course is worthless, and his end is woe. Spirit of God, grant now Your light!

1. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful."

All praise be to the grace of God that in this world of widespread sin some lovely spots are seen. There are the heirs of life. Born from above, to God they live. Abhorrence of all evil is their grand distinction. The godless have their schemes, their pleas, their plots, their evil counsels. In such vile course the blessed ones never walk. They resolutely shun the hateful path. Sinners have their chosen way. How broad! how thronged! what multitudes move down the sad decline! In this the blessed ones have no part. They hate the filth. They keep their feet unsoiled. Wickedness has its topstone. Scorn and derision proceed to mock God's word, Christ's work, and all the lowly followers of the Lamb. Too many love the sneering seat, and impious jests find sympathizing smiles. Such company is counterpart of hell. The blessed man sits not in such fellowship. We here are taught that in sin there is gradation. Let us flee the first step. The rolling stone descends with quickening speed.

2. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law he meditates day and night."

The godly man has his delights. His cup is crowned with joy. His table is spread with richest pleasures. The Scriptures are his soul-refreshing feast. They gladden him with views of God as his own God; Christ as his own Savior; the Spirit as his guide and sanctifying Comforter; heaven as his home forever; and all things ordered for his well-being. The morning light invites him to this sacred page. In the day his thoughts cling closely to it. The evening's shadows and night's wakeful hours call to rejoice in this treasury of truth.

3. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

Behold the tree on the brook's verdant bank, whose roots drink constantly the flowing stream! The laden branches bend with plenteous fruit. Unfading freshness decks the leaves. No lovelier object adorns nature's field. It is a picture of the godly man. Deep springs of grace supply his inner life. The fruits of righteousness, which are the Spirit's work, abound. His fertility of holiness is rich, and large, and real. The Lord is truly with him; and where the Lord is, there is every good. Of Joseph it is sweetly said, "The Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." Of David we read, "He went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

4. "The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind drives away."

The scene is changed. The ungodly widely differ. Nature shows, also, their picture. The fruitful tree gives place to chaff—light, barren, hollow, worthless—the refuse of the barn-floor. It yields no profit. It is cast out, the sport of winds. Driven away, it leaves no trace behind. Such are the godless. They minister no grace. They benefit no souls. None gain by conversation with them. Unstable, they are tossed by every changing wind. Temptations drive them headlong. Terrible is their final doom. Jesus comes, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Judgment is near. The Judge stands at the door. The great white throne will soon be set. The dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works. They cannot flee the dread tribunal. There is no escape. No mask can hide their guilt. Their sins are

all recorded. No blood blots out the stains. They plead no Savior's merit. They have no interest in the saving cross. No solid ground sustains their feet. They cannot stand. Undefended, they receive the dreadful sentence, 'Depart! you cursed ones!' Thus they are cast far from the congregation of the righteous. May we live ever with this last scene before us, and never rest until clear evidence is ours that we have happy place in "the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven."

6. "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Amid all their trials, sorrows, pains, reproaches, let the righteous lift up rejoicing heads. The eye of God rests on their way. He called them to the narrow road. He upholds their feeble steps. He safely leads them to the glorious end. Unfailing watchfulness surrounds them. But the broad road, with its unrighteous throng, goes down assuredly to hell.

Holy Spirit, give us the portion of the blessed man! May we escape the doom of the ungodly!

Psalm 10

The main feature in this psalm is the foul portraiture of evil. Prayer follows in full confidence that God will arise and judge. May the Spirit raise hatred of evil in our hearts!

1. "Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?"

There is much weakness in the strongest faith. It is prone to sink when billows swell and storms descend. Trials assume desertion's form. Darkness seems to imply that God cannot be near. The sun eclipsed seems gone forever. But faith in weakest hours still prays, and meekly questions, 'Why is it so?'

2. "The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor; let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

The Spirit proceeds to draw a full-blown portrait of sin. The mask is withdrawn. The monster is dragged forth to light. The hideous features are revealed. The Spirit's pen cannot exaggerate. The dark colors are not too dark. The deep ingredient of the wicked heart is pride. This scorns the humble followers of the Lamb, and seeks to trample them beneath insulting feet. But often do oppressive schemes recoil, and plots involve self-ruin.

3. "For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous, whom the Lord abhors."

In arrogance the wicked boasts that his desires shall prosper. And who can hinder him? He loves the hoarders of ill-gotten gains. In spite of God's abhorrence, they are his delight.

4. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts."

His haughty attitude vaunts independence. He does not stoop to study God's will. He is no suppliant at wisdom's gate. God is not the substance of each thought, but rather rashness says, "There is no God."

5. "Yet they succeed in everything they do. They do not see your punishment awaiting them. They pour scorn on all their enemies."

His every step insults both God and man. His dim eye grovels on the ground. It has no power to pierce the heavens and read God's will. His insolence condemns his foes.

6-7. "He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under his tongue is mischief and vanity."

In self-complacency he thinks prosperity must last forever, and evil days can never come. He cannot speak without floods of evil issuing forth. His words are open curses and insidious falsehoods.

8. "They lurk in dark alleys, murdering the innocent who pass by. They are always searching for some helpless victim."

Evil words lead on to evil deeds. He craftily devises murderous acts. He narrowly observes the poor and feeble, thirsting for their blood.

9-10. "Like lions they crouch silently, waiting to pounce on the helpless. Like hunters they capture their victims and drag them away in nets. The helpless are overwhelmed and collapse; they fall beneath the strength of the wicked."

Sometimes as a beast of prey he crouches for a desperate spring; sometimes as a crafty huntsman he spreads entangling nets. By every art he seeks to execute his hateful plots.

11. "He has said in his heart, God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see it."

False thoughts of God deceive him. Impunity persuades him that God disregards. He flatters himself that omniscience does not observe him.

12. "Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Your hand; do not forget the humble."

These sights of sin impel believers to the mercy-seat. They turn away. They look above. They seek their God. They tell out their fears. They ask His help. They commit the persecuted to His care. They stir Him up to have them in remembrance.

13-15. "Why do the wicked condemn God? He has said in his heart, You will not require it. You have seen it; for You behold mischief and spite, to requite it with Your hand; the poor commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked and the evil man; seek out his wickedness, until You find none."

How vain the atheistic thought that God sits still in unconcern! From His high throne He ponders all the ways of men. In right time He will avenge His honor. The helpless shall indeed be helped; the boastful arm of wickedness shall be shattered. All evil shall be dragged to light; no sin shall go unpunished.

16. "The Lord is King forever and ever; the heathen have perished out of His land."

Glorious light shines forth. The throne of God is set. He rules, He reigns, in majesty supreme forever. His enemies are all destroyed. Throughout the blissful realm no trace of evil can be found. His happy subjects now lift up the head. One shout is heard, Glory, glory to our God!

17-18. "Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress."

Good Lord, increase our faith in the power and prevalence of prayer! The eternal world will show that supplication never desired in vain. Grace prompts the desire, inspires the words, prepares the heart, and gives the

full reply. When God comes forth to answer and to help, what can feeble flesh avail! It perishes forever. From this view of the wickedness of the wicked, their righteous doom, the glories of the coming kingdom, let us bless Him who has delivered us from the wrath to come, and called us to His kingdom and glory!

Psalm 11

Confidence relies on God when storms of trouble threaten. The terribleness of final judgment is revealed. May perfect shelter be our happy lot!

1. "In the Lord I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"

Happy the soul which calmly rests on God! He is a rock so firmly based and so exceeding high, that swelling billows dash in vain, and raging storms harmlessly beat. Feet planted on it are as safe as God is safe. His power is omnipotence. Who can upset it? His love can never change. His wisdom knows no bounds. His truth can never fail. Let us then trust Him, at all times, in all places, under all trials. Let us trust Him with our souls and bodies, for time and for eternity. Let us trust Him with all our matters and with all our friends. Safe in His arms we may defy all foes.

But they will taunt with sneering malice. They will exclaim, Make haste to flee. There is no safety but in flight. As the frightened bird seeks refuge in the high and distant hills, so fly with rapid wing. To tarry is destruction. Tarry not.

2. "For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart."

Peril may be near. The wicked hate and plot—their bow is strong; their arrows ready; their eyes are watchful. If given the opportunity, their venomous shafts will inflict deadly wounds. Thus Jesus walked amid incessant snares. At every turn some ambush was concealed. What crafty questions spread entangling nets! So too it is each day with us. The enemy is ever near. Let us look up. Let our daily cry be heard, "In the Lord I put my trust."

3. "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The foundations of our trust are firm, and never can be moved. We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken. What is the strong foundation of our trust? It is Christ. It is His glorious person, His deity and manhood indissolubly joined, His everlasting love, His finished work, His precious blood, His expiating death, His all-atoning cross, His resurrection-might, His rule at the right hand, His never-ceasing intercession, His well-ordered providence, His coming kingdom, His eternal reign. How blessed, how encouraging, are these truths! Not one can be opposed, not one can disappoint. We may rest all our weight on them. They cannot sink. If any flaw could be discerned, if any weak part showed insecurity, we might indeed despond. But building on this solid base, we may indeed reject all taunts. We have a strong city. God has appointed Salvation for walls and bulwarks.

4. "The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men."

Ours is no visionary trust. Of old our God was present in the sanctuary. True worshipers might there approach and find that He drew near to them. Christ is our mercy-seat. In Him we meet our God; in Him our God meets us. What then shall be our fear?

But more; our God sits high enthroned in heaven. He rules arrayed in omnipotent power. How safe are those who are protected by His arm! His eye sees every outward act and searches every inward thought. His people never are unseen. No darkness can conceal His foes. We may then confidently trust.

5. "The Lord tries the righteous; but the wicked, and him who loves violence, His soul hates."

Many are indeed our trials, but all are ordered for our good. Thus faith is tested; leaks in the vessel are discovered; sincerity is discerned; weak parts are strengthened; the walk becomes more close, more vigilant, and more strict. These probings are among our blessings. "Blessed is the man that endures trial, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." But all iniquity is

hateful in His sight. His holy nature abhors sin.

6. "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup."

They cannot escape just wrath. Their frightful doom is here portrayed. Mercy warns of this destruction, that men forewarned may flee to Christ. Images of agony are here combined. What Sodom and her plains foreshowed is coming reality. A fiery deluge overwhelms its victim. A flaming lake engulfs. There is a cup which they must drink. The cup is hot to overflowing with all extremity and intensity of torment. Wrath has not yet gone forth. Let all who hear fly speedily to Christ.

7. "For the righteous Lord loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright."

Righteousness will execute what righteousness denounces. Justice maintains forever that rebels are thus punished. But saving smiles beam sweetly over the redeemed flock. God now beholds them in all love. They soon shall see Him in all glory. Holy Spirit! keep us ever in the light of His countenance.

Psalm 23

Jesus leads His flock like a shepherd. May we rejoice in the delights of His fold!

1. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in need."

Happy the soul that, looking to Jesus as the great, the good, the one Shepherd, can add in truth, "And He is mine. I have heard His calling voice; I have seen His inviting smile; I have fled to Him; I have entered into His fold; I have committed myself to His guardian care; He has received me; He has given me most gracious welcome; I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." With what joyous rapture may the inhabitant of the fold continue, "I shall not be in need!" How can need be mine? He who is pledged to my support has all resources in His hand; He has all power in heaven and earth. He who has promised to give me eternal life will not allow me to perish by the way. The end secured is security along the road.

We sometimes err in our desires. In blindness we crave injurious pastures. It is our wisdom to leave all to Him. He is all wisdom and all love. He will tend wisely and most kindly. All good things will assuredly abound. Perhaps we err if we claim this psalm as our exclusive portion. Jesus Himself once knew the need of the poor sheep; but He found a Shepherd in His heavenly Father, and He lacked nothing.

2. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters."

A picture of rural beauty expands before us. We see a happy flock resting in calm quietness in fields rich in luxuriant plenty; we see them guided to meadows through which refreshing streams glide tranquilly. The scene is perfect. Here is repose amid abundance. Nothing disturbs the calm enjoyment.

The antitype is the believer's soul secure from all alarms, peaceful in

knowledge of the Lord's protection, feasting on the rich provision of His Word, regaled with sustaining promises, nurtured by the Spirit's rich supplies, reposing under the shadow of the cross, drinking the cooling streams of scriptural teaching, delighting in the sacramental feast. How ample is this sweet provision! Who will not thankfully exclaim, "I have all, and abound?"

This picture also exhibits Jesus. Amid His many troubles His soul could calmly rest on the assurance of His Father's love, and feed rejoicingly on covenant engagement.

3. "He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

There are times when grace appears to fade, when trials trouble and depress, when lively vigor faints and deadness chills the soul. Sad indeed would be the outcome unless the watchful Shepherd rendered help; but He assists the downcast; He shows reviving smiles; He brings the cordial of some precious promise. The withering leaf renews its freshness; the tottering limbs again are strong; the heavenward path in ways of righteousness is again stoutly trod.

Jesus often drank depression's weakening cup. His soul was troubled; but help from above restored unwavering strength.

4. "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

Our sorest trial is when, with feeble step, we traverse the cheerless valley of death. The climate is chilly. Nature fails. We shrink from the icy hand; but still there is no fear. The tender Shepherd is by our side; His gentle guidance removes apprehension. The waters fail to overwhelm. Sweet texts bring light, and the Spirit applies comfort. Your rod, Your staff, the emblems of the Shepherd's care, drive back the threatening foes, and give sustaining strength. To lean on Jesus in the darkest hour is light and joy and peace. The Good Shepherd knows the chilly hand of death. He has

passed this dark valley; but His God was with Him. Ministering angels brought support. He found no evil, and no evil shall destroy His sheep.

5. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over."

Our enemies stand round in vast array, but they cannot destroy enjoyments. In their sight God spread a banquet of delights. His inward unction causes the heart to show all kinds of radiant joy, as the countenance refreshed with ointments. We hold a cup; God's hand supplies it; He pours in pleasures to the extent of capacity to receive. The overjoyed believer feels, "Stop, stop; it is enough;" but still the goblet overflows. Who can measure the delights of God's presence, smile, and word?

6. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Such is faith's sweet assurance. While days below continue, goodness and mercy, close as closest shadow, shall bring up the rear. What good thing can be absent if the Lord is present, and Jesus confirms the pledge, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world?" Failure there can never be. No sheep will perish or be left behind. All will be safely gathered in the many-mansioned house. There will the Great Shepherd ever dwell amid His ransomed flock. Great Shepherd, You are our all; we lovingly adore You!

Psalm 51

Of all the Psalms, this is the one, perhaps, which is most frequently interwoven in the believer's prayers and pondered in his meditations. It has been the outbreak of innumerable hearts, and has been, and still is, the wrestling cry at the mercy-seat. Repeated are the prayers for pardon of vile guilt; struggling are the cries for renewing and sanctifying grace. Professions are uttered of devotedness to God's service, and prayers are added for the Church.

1-2. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

In the deepest sense of guilt, prayer cries loudly for mercy. The measure of needed mercy is expressed. The measure is quite measureless. It is according to God's lovingkindness. But His love is everlasting love. It has no origin. It can have no end. It is, moreover, in accordance with the multitude of God's tender mercies. But who can count them? Infinitude is their scope. Such mercy is indeed needed; for nothing less than limitless mercy could reach the extent of the prayer for the remission of such transgressions, such iniquity, and such sin.

3. "For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me."

The awakened sinner panted for relief; for grievous was the burden which oppressed him. He did not cloak his dreadful guilt—he felt it, and he confessed it. He did not strive to escape the tormenting memory. There was an appalling object ever in his sight—his fearful deeds. He is not taught of God, who is not conscious of ever-present guilt.

4. "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight; that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge."

The real character of sin is rebellion against God. This constitutes its essence, its magnitude, its malignity. Doubtless fellow-men may be most grievously injured and outraged and afflicted. Many may be wounded; many tears may have been drawn forth, but the main evil assails God. The blow is aimed at God's supremacy.

Hence God's truth and justice are exalted to their highest pinnacles. In every threat, in every denunciation, in every execution of vengeance, homage is rendered to these essential attributes. When sin is punished, holiness is vindicated.

5. "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me."

Sin is here traced to nature's original corruption. The tree is radically corrupt. No good fruit can hang from its branches. The spring is poisoned, the waters which flow from it are polluted. When Adam yielded to the tempter's wiles, the whole line of his descendants perished in him. Sad, indeed, is our case, except redeeming grace transplants us from the ruined stock, and grafts us into the heavenly vine.

6. "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom."

When sin is deeply felt and openly confessed, conscience feels that God requires true sincerity throughout the heart. The folly of mocking God with unmeaning tears or unreal prayers is felt; and there is most earnest supplication to God to implant wisdom in the heart and soul, and to guide in the way everlasting.

7. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Obliteration of guilt is again implored in terms fragrant with Gospel-sweetness. Faith clearly sees the purpose of sacrificial rites. It knows that the blood streaming from the dying victim foreshowed the blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. It knows that this

blood is expiation perfect, entire, and forevermore; that its sprinkling removes every stain of evil, and makes the contrite believer pure as purity can be in the sight of God.

8. "Make me hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice."

The anguish of the soul under sense of God's wrath is pictured by the keenest pains of body; even by the agony of bones fractured and bruised. When healing comes, how great is the relief! Such is the transport of delight which thrills through the soul when God restores His smile, and whispers peace to the conscience. Let each mourning penitent cease not the wrestling cry, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice."

9. "Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."

Pardon is still the foremost thought in the contrite Psalmist's mind. He supplicates it under another image. He fears lest God should keep his sins in the light of His countenance. He therefore prays that an averted look should no more have them in view. Conscious of innumerable transgressions, and feeling need of entire pardon, he beseeches that not one single offense should remain unsprinkled by the obliterating blood.

10-11. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence; and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."

Desire of pardon is linked to earnest longing for renewing and sanctifying grace. The cleansing of the heart is the absolute work of God. It is a new creation. It is calling that into existence which no power of man could accomplish. Conscious of utter impotence, the cry struggles for creating and renewing grace. Supplication is added for continuance of God's life-giving presence, and the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

12-13. "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be

converted to You."

Who can express the joy of realized salvation! It is heaven begun. It is the commencement of the never-ending bliss. But it may be forfeited and interrupted for a while. Allowed sin is quick to extinguish. Let instant recourse be made to prayer. Let God, who only gave and only can renew, be supplicated to restore. The effect of this reviving grace is earnest effort to call others to the ways of God, and faith in Christ. He who enjoys this gracious treasure burns with longing that others may partake.

14. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness."

Remembrance of some special sin will oftentimes haunt the heart. A frightful specter will stand before the eyes. It was so now with David. The dreadful thought was present, that his abominable sin had caused a fellow-creature's death. He saw that his hands were stained with murderous spots. He must be a stranger to all peace, until sure of deliverance from this heinous guilt. With his soul, therefore, he prays that such mercy might be given unto him. The result would be sure; he would be loud in praise, proclaiming that God was a covenant-keeping God, and righteous in fulfilling His promises to forgive all sin through the atoning blood.

15-16. "O Lord, open my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, else would I give it; You do not delight in burnt-offering."

When the grace of praise is freely poured into the heart, the power to give utterance must still be added. A channel must be opened for the stream to flow. An open lip must be desired, in addition to a full heart. Faith sees that the outward rite of sacrificial homage is not the real demand of God. Required services may not be withheld; they testify obedience. But they should do much more. They should evince the soul's entire dependence on the hidden meaning—the true Lamb of God, the all-atoning blood, the death which satisfies every violated attribute. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

God is a Spirit, and His eye is on a spiritual service. He does not turn with indifference from a spirit broken and crushed, and ground to powder, by the weighty hand of the accusing law. He sees the buddings of real faith, and true apprehension of the appeasing victim. He is ever ready to bind up that which is thus broken. Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

18-19. "Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering, and whole burnt-offering; then they shall offer bullocks upon Your altar."

The penitent cannot conclude without embracing the whole Church in his fervent prayer; he supplicates mercy for his beloved Zion, and protection from all her foes. Safe in the loving-kindness of her God, her altars will blaze, the victims will die in countless numbers, the blood will flow in constant stream; but it will not be a mere superabundance of outward rites. In all Christ is seen. Christ is magnified. Christ is honored. Christ is All.

Psalm 90

This Psalm is entitled "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." As such it justly claims devout attention as the earliest of inspired songs. In adopting it may we move forward on the heavenward road!

1. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations."

Happy has been the experience of the saints of God at every period. They could always find a home on high, in which they might repose and sweetly dwell. To all who approach in the name of Jesus the portals of heaven open, and smiles welcome. By faith may we thus enter, and in God continually abide. No monarch occupies so grand a palace.

2. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or before You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God."

A glorious description of the self-existent and everlasting God here meets us. Before time was, while time rolls on, when time shall be no more, He lives—the great "I am that I am."

3-6. "You turn man to destruction; and say, Return, you children of men. For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. You carry them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes, and grows up; in the evening it is cut down, and withers."

In contrast mark the short-lived instability of man. Formed of the dust of the earth, God speaks the word, and to that dust he instantly returns. In God's sight time has no place. A thousand years are but as a fleeting day. Many images combine to show the brevity of man's existence. A rushing torrent bears him out of sight. Sleep soon ceases, and in the morning leaves no trace. The night-watch tarries not. When day dawns the grass is green, before evening it is withered up. Human life is but a momentary

bloom.

7-9. "For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told."

Sin is the root of this nothingness. Our iniquities are many. They may be hidden from our view; but they are all unmistakable to the omniscience of God. When His anger is aroused, we vanish as the remembrance of a brief recital.

10. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Those who are permitted to count threescore years and ten, should regard their allotted course as fully run. The fleeting generations in the wilderness taught this lesson to Moses. Few who entered Canaan had seen that period. If unusual strength should lengthen out man's days, the failing powers bring labor and sorrow. The continuance is fleeting. Departure is at the door.

11-12. "Who knows the power of Your anger? even according to Your fear so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom."

God is not limited in any attribute. His anger then may work dreadfully. Let us tremble to provoke His wrath; and rather in knowledge of life's brevity give our little space to search for true wisdom. He is well taught who studies God in Christ.

13-17. "Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent You concerning Your servants. O satisfy us early with Your mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein You have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your glory unto their children. And let

the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands."

Solemn prayers are the fitting conclusion. The Lord is implored to return, to relax displeasure, to cause mercy to overflow. Then joy and gladness will super-abound. He will not be slow to reveal His wondrous power to beautify His people with salvation, and to make all their work to prosper. May these prayers ever ascend from our hearts! Descending blessings will crown us with delights.

Psalm 91

Internal textual evidence establishes that the apprehension of near sickness and the approach of pestilence awakened this Psalm. Firm confidence is expressed in God's protecting power. May we find Him a very present help in all our troubles!

1. "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The Ark behind the veil was regarded as the symbol of God's presence. Common gaze penetrates not the secret place. In general men do not strive for acquaintance with God. They do not seek Him in Christ. But those who thus find Him will ever cling to Him with strengthening grasp. They will rest in Him as in a calm and cool abode. His shadow will ward off the fiery darts of Satan, and avert the hot persecution of the ungodly.

2. "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him will I trust."

Faith makes bold profession. It casts off fear, and avows that in God it finds a safe retreat, a sure protection, an almighty friend. This confidence will never be disappointed.

3-6. "Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the harmful pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust; His truth shall be your shield and rampart. You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday."

Troubles are enumerated such as are common to this mortal lot. But trust in God exalts above their fatal reach. The fowler may lay hidden snares, but they shall not entrap. The noxious pestilence shall inflict no deathful wound. The Almighty shall extend His covering wing. His faithful promises shall uphold the combatant in the hour of battle. By night, by

day, the dwelling shall be impervious to plague.

There may be a literal reference to the deliverance of Israel's sons, and their exemption from all contact with harm when plagues laid low the Egyptian hosts. There may be spiritual reference to the deliverance of God's children from the destroying attacks of Satan. But one truth is undeniable. The real happiness and safety of true believers is emphatically assured, and we are exhorted to pray for sustaining faith, and in all perils to trust without one fear.

7-10. "A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there no evil shall befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling."

Other terms are added to strengthen assurance. Those who by faith repose on God shall surely be upheld. Though troubles be multiplied, they shall never be cast off. In much apparent peril they shall be really safe.

11-12. "For He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. They shall bear You up in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone."

This promise is distinctly addressed to Jesus. As such the devil quoted it, and Jesus heard without rejection. If we are one with Jesus, the promises which were poured upon His head will flow down to us, and will invest us in security.

13-16. "You shall tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet. Because He has set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

The same encouraging strain still sounds. All who have set their love on

God, and all who know His name, may claim fulfillment. They shall have deliverance in every day of trouble. God will honor them in time, and honor them with a long life, even forever and ever. Happy indeed are the people who thus dwell in the secret place of the Most High.

Psalm 103

As in the firmament one star differs from another star in glory, so this hymn shines with surpassing luster. Through a long course of years it has been especial comfort to the Church. May it be especial comfort to our hearts!

1-2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits."

Praise is a plant of heavenly growth. It is the saint's choice garden of delights. Drowsy souls should be stirred up, and every faculty quickened to expend its language. Heaven is opened wide to pour down benefits. Every benefit should be received with adoration. Abundant crops of praise should spring from this abundant seed.

3-5. "Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases. Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

A throng of mercies crowd upon our view. Each presents large themes of praise. Who can bless God enough that He is ever ready to pardon—that He has provided a fountain in His dear Son's blood to wash out every iniquity. It is a soul-transporting truth that those who hide in the Savior's wounds are screened forever from His wrath. But the believer, though heir of forgiveness, is ever prone to fall into unhealthy malady. It is a true description, The whole head is sick—and the whole heart faint—from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is nothing in us but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Can these diseases be all healed? Jesus is full remedy. He gives health and a cure. He is Jehovah-Rophi. To Him, also, we may bring every malady of our sickly frames. During His earthly ministry diseases fled before Him. As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole. What an encouragement to bring all sickness to Him! He is Jesus still. Who can give thanks enough for redemption's wonders! It rescues us from destruction's grasp. It cries, Deliver him from going down

to the pit; I have found a ransom. Lovingkindness, also, and tender mercies exalt the believer to grand eminence. A crown is set upon his head, sparkling with glory. Rich supplies too of sustenance are abundantly provided. All things necessary to cheer and to invigorate enrich his board. Thus, though at times he may appear to droop, he revives, as an eagle, rising from its languishing to the freshness and vigor of its youth.

6-7. "The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel."

He especially befriends His children, when oppressed by cruel foes. He stretches forth His hand to vindicate their cause. In His dealings with Moses and the children of Israel, He draws a chart in which His watchful guidance may be ever traced.

8-10. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

The Lord's tender dealings are here portrayed. It is Scripture's frequent testimony that He is rich in mercy, and that His mercy endures forever. Mercy looks upon our misery and flies to give alleviation. Grace, also, is its close comrade. It compassionates demerits. It brings the robe of Christ's righteousness to cover our unworthiness. We are quick to sin. But our God is long-suffering. He pauses and restrains due vengeance. The plenitude of His goodness outweighs the plenitude of our guilt. When He chides it is His strange work. The scourge is soon checked, and smiles of love dispel the frowns of wrath. Who can regard our mountains of mountains of iniquity, and not confess, We are undone. If God should dispense strict justice to our sins, we perish. But in Christ Jesus free grace triumphs.

11-12. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has

He removed our transgressions from us."

Infinitude is borrowed to exemplify God's mercy. Immeasurable distance parts the heaven from earth, so God's mercy exceeds all bounds. Thought cannot conceive it. Words cannot express it. Ransomed souls are its main recipients. They are aptly described as filled with the reverential grace of fear. Infinite space again expresses the removal of our sins. No traversing steps can join the east to west. As we advance from the one the other constantly recedes. Let us bless the Holy Spirit for employing this image to teach how utterly the guilt of sin is cancelled.

13-14. "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Sweet is the picture of paternal love. Compassion melts a father's breast. He speaks and acts in constant tenderness. But what is earthly feeling compared to the benevolence of a heavenly Father's heart! He knows, also, our every infirmity. By fellow-feeling Jesus sympathizes with weak humanity.

15-18. "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them."

This picture shows the frailty and instability of man. Enduring strength is not his property. Behold the grass of the meadow! The Word cries, "All flesh is grass." For a little moment it is green and vigorous. But in a speck of time it is dried up and withered. Behold, also, the flower of the field! It presents a lovely form. But evanescent is its beauty! A biting wind arises. Its bright hues all fade. It disappears and leaves no trace. Its place is vacant. We may search, but it is gone. View now in contrast the mercy of our God! It is from everlasting to everlasting. It endures forever. No age can change its loveliness, or dim its beautiful smiles. So, also, His righteousness beams from generation to generation. Covenant love blesses

His faithful people, whose delight is to be steadfast in His ways, and in whose thoughts His commandments have perpetual sway.

19. "The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all."

Faith is invigorated by contemplating the sovereignty of God. In heaven He sits as King. His rule is unbounded over all the inhabitants of earth. What thought can be more cheering! What truth can give more solid support! How safe are they who shelter beneath His wings. They are kept as the very apple of His eye. Who can harm them? His sheep shall never perish, for who can pluck them out of His hands?

20-22. "Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all His hosts; you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul."

Let universal praise pervade all heaven and earth. Let all the angelic hosts, whose life is uninterrupted service, shout aloud. Marvelous powers are their inheritance. Let all be consecrated to one work. Theirs is the joy of hearkening to His voice. Let theirs be the joy of rendering blessing. Let all creation swell the strain. Throughout His realm let silence be unknown. O my soul, let noblest rapture emanate from you. Let loudest notes attest your love..

Psalm 119

1. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

Here is a glowing picture of the pious heart. Here is the inner life of those who sit on the high eminence of blessedness, and rank among the blessed of the Lord. The question cannot be repressed, Who are they to whom such dignity belongs? The clear reply here meets us, They are the undefiled in the way; they walk in the law of the Lord. It is a solemn truth, that the path of life is through a miry road. Our steps are in pollution's land. How, then, can our feet be undefiled! How can our garments be unsoiled! We cannot guide ourselves. Unaided, we stumble into sloughs of defilement. But all help is near. Jesus is at hand to keep us by His mighty power. Let us lean on His supporting arm at every step, and when we fall let us rise and wash our robes in His all-cleansing blood. So may we ever be among the undefiled in the way; and let the law of the Lord, lovely in purity, glorious in holiness, perfect in love, be the path in which our feet advance. Jesus is our model and our all. God's law was in His heart; He was its living portrait.

2. "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, and who seek Him with the whole heart."

Again, we learn that holiness is blessedness. Let our constant prayer grow stronger, Lord, what will You have us to do? The reply is, Study the testimonies. They speak from heaven, loud as the thunder, clear as the light, sweet as the celestial songs. Let us thus seek His will, with our whole hearts united in the one pursuit.

3. "They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways."

The blessed cannot consent to evil. They flee the downward path. They shun it with extreme abhorrence. Their hearts entirely love the heavenward way. They cling to it with undeviating tread. Their onward progress is always upward. Thus they advance in happiness towards

heaven.

4. "You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently."

He who desires our good at all times issues with authority His sovereign commands. They enjoin us to adhere with diligence to the tract which His Word marks out. In strict obedience is real and unfailing happiness. To obey is heaven begun.

5. "Oh that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!"

But when the heart is willing the flesh is weak. Proneness to err still threatens to mislead. Hence incessant desires besiege Heaven that directing grace may ever guide aright.

6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all Your commandments."

Shame and confusion are the wages of those who disregard God's will. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. If our hearts condemn us not, we shall lift up our heads in joy.

7. "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned Your righteous judgments."

The blessed man is ever a pupil in God's school. He desires to learn the ways of righteousness. Thus upright praises will ever flow from his lips.

8. "I will keep Your statutes; O forsake me not utterly."

Firm are his resolves, but he well knows that utter weakness may consist with strong desires. Experience has taught that when we would do good evil is present. He knows that real strength is heaven-born; therefore earnest cries implore that God at all times would uphold graciously. He hates putting away.

9. "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to

Your word."

Peculiar temptations plot against the young. Passions are strong; experience is weak. Satan assails with unremitted are. But still there is escape. Abundant records speak of holy youths. They have pursued one course. God's Word has been their compass. By this guidance they have diligently steered through all the waves of peril.

10. "With my whole heart have I sought You; O let me not wander from Your commandments."

Sincerity is here avowed. Blessed are those who can thus truly appeal to God. May our conscience ever bear witness that no portion of the heart has been given to ungodly ways! But still God's help is asked, that the way may be so hedged up that no outlet to forbidden paths may be found. We may run well and yet may stumble.

11. "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You."

It is a precious truth that God's Word is a sure antidote to sin. If this is treasured in the heart, if it stands as a guard before the portals, evil cannot enter. May we ever be thus garrisoned!

12. "Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes."

The blessed man will ever bless and ever pray. His constant cry will be, Send out Your light and Your truth, that they may lead me.

13. "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Your mouth."

He will learn that he may teach. His heart, filled with the Word, will overflow and fertilize all who are within his reach.

14. "I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches."

The Word is a bright sunbeam in the soul. Riches do not so much

exhilarate the worldling as the revelation of God's ways delight and gladden the blessed man.

15. **"I will meditate in Your precepts, and have respect to Your ways."**

Holy meditation exalts above the world. The precepts are a perpetual feast.

16. **"I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word."**

Do we seek happiness? It is to be found in constantly pondering the Word and will of God. It is a blessed resolve; Your Word shall not depart out of the precincts of my memory.

17-18 **"Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word." We may humbly ask continuance of earthly life, if our desire is that as mirrors we may reflect the Word. Oh that we might live as a transcript of the heavenly will, and thus be followers of God as dear children!**

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law."

Lovely light may beam upon us, and wondrous scenes surround; but the gain is none if sightless eyes survey. By nature we are thus blind; unless God grants sight, we cannot behold the wonders which His law contains. Let us weary heaven with cries for enlightening grace. When the command goes forth, Let there be light, there will be light.

19. **"I am a stranger in the earth; hide not Your commandments from me."**

Here we are pilgrims in a foreign land. As such we need guidance. God's Word will show the right path and keep us in it. Let us pray that this word may brightly illumine our way. If we walk in darkness, it is because we do not see the light.

20. **"My soul breaks for the longing that it has for Your judgments at all times."**

Weak and wavering desires should be utterly eschewed. The true child of God so longs for the precious Word, that his soul seems scarcely able to contain the swelling feeling. Unless the presence of God's Word relieves, he can scarcely live.

21. "You have rebuked the proud who are cursed, who err from Your commandments."

We have heard who are the blessed. We have now the portrait of the cursed. They proudly wander from the everlasting way. Their straying feet rush to destruction. God's rebuke descends, and the rebuke is ruin.

22. "Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Your testimonies."

The pious are generally regarded with scorn in this fallen world. It is a grievous trial. When we are conscious that contempt is incurred by adhering to God's Word, we may humbly pray for its removal.

23. "Princes also sat and spoke against me; but Your servant meditated on Your statutes."

Men of exalted rank too often slander the servants of the Lord. But a sweet refuge is always near in meditation on the glorious law. They will not hear nor heed whose souls are thus engaged.

24. "Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors."

Such meditation is most precious. It is a boundless expanse of happiness. It is a treasury of counsels to guide throughout life's course. May we be thus happy and thus wise!

25. "My soul cleaves to the dust; quicken me according to Your word."

The soul by nature rises not to heaven; unaided from on high it grovels in the mire of earth. Hence the wisdom of constant prayer, that spiritual life

may expand wings for upward flight. Many promises give prospect of success.

26. "I have declared my ways, and You heard me; teach me Your statutes."

Having deep experience of the success of prayer, let us keep nothing back from God. He will hear, and heavenly lessons will be granted.

27. "Make me to understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I talk of Your wondrous works."

Our desire for intelligence in God's precepts cannot be too earnest. When thus enlightened we shall not be mute. Delighted converse will tell the dealings of Him whose name is Wonderful.

28. "My soul melts for heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word."

Periods recur when the soul is heavy laden. When thus powerless, strength should be implored in accordance with the sure promises of God.

29. "Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me Your law graciously."

Grievous evidence of the fall is seen in the tendency to misrepresent and to deceive. The devil was a liar from the beginning; and his progeny inherits his propensities. Let us strive to be the followers of Him who is emphatically the truth. For this purpose let us pray that God would write His law of uprightness on our hearts.

30. "I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments have I laid before me."

False ways will indeed be eschewed by the blessed man. The way of truth will be his deliberate choice. God's judgments will be the desired path. Let us not, however, forget that in ourselves we are weak to execute these

good resolves.

31. "I have stuck to Your testimonies; O Lord, put me not to shame."

With clinging hands the testimonies will be grasped. The disgrace of straying will be dreaded. Prayer will be made for deliverance from such shame.

32. "I will run the way of Your commandments, when You shall enlarge my heart."

The narrowness of the contracted heart forbids expanse. Encumbered affections cannot mount; therefore earnest prayer is made that the entangling chains may be removed, and freedom granted to run nimbly up the blessed road.

33. "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end."

The believer, conscious of ignorance, ever seeks divine instruction. He knows that the page of Scripture is obscure unless heavenly light shines on it. Therefore constant is his prayer, and constant his resolve to persevere unto the end.

34. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; yes, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

Repeated prayer wrestles for an understanding heart. Resolution is declared that the law shall be cherished with undivided affection.

35. "Make me to go in the path of Your commandments; for therein do I delight."

Prayer again wrestles for strict adherence to the holy path. It is the way of pleasantness; every step abounds in delights.

36. "Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness."

Without a restraining hand the heart is prone to turn aside into the byways of petty love of self. The remedy must be from above. Heavenly aid is therefore sought.

37. "Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in Your way."

The world abounds with sights of emptiness, frivolity, and folly. Eyes are enticed to gaze; there is danger in the very sight. Let prayer be made that the eyes may not behold, and that quickened steps may ascend Zion's hill.

38. "Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to Your fear."

It is happiness to have the Word firmly rooted in the heart. This blessed state will be the desire of those who are jealously apprehensive of straying from the gospel-rule.

39. "Turn away my reproach which I fear; for Your judgments are good."

It is a reproach to wander. The godly man will dread this shame. He knows how excellent the ways of God are, and he prays that he may never incur the dishonor of disobedience.

40. "Behold, I have longed for Your precepts; quicken me in Your righteousness."

Deep desire for entire sanctification is here expressed; prayer is made that the Spirit of the Lord would animate the pursuit of righteousness. May we thus ever strive! We shall succeed, and great will be our gain.

41. "Let Your mercies come also to me, O Lord, even Your salvation, according to Your word."

This prayer is a cup filled to the brim. A multitude of tender mercies stand always ready to issue from the courts above. These mercies assure of salvation from the penalties and power of sin, and of welcome to the

joys of heaven. These mercies are our promised heritage. How should we wrestle until they fill us to overflowing!

42. "So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me; for I trust in Your word."

When the heart realizes assured salvation, it is supplied with abundant answers to those who sneer at the delights of faith.

43. "And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in Your judgments."

Assurance only lives while God maintains it. Fears will intrude lest the truth should languish on our lips. Hope sees the declarations of the Lord, and looks upward.

44. "So shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever."

There is rich comfort in the confidence that divine grace will enable us to persevere. The end is seen. Bright is the deliverance.

45. "And I will walk at liberty; for I seek Your precepts."

All restraining shackles shall be cast off. The believer will freely walk in diligent pursuit of truth.

46. "I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed."

No array of earthly power will intimidate the man of God. Strong in the Lord, he will boldly wave the standard of salvation.

47. "And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved."

Who can fail to see the believer's happy state? The paths of holiness are pleasantness and peace. The law reigns in the heart, and love delights in

sanctified obedience.

48. "My hands also will I lift up to Your commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in Your statutes."

He will give open testimony of his entire surrender to the ways of the Lord, and his mind will revel in holy meditation. Here the soul finds repose. This is the ecstasy of life.

49. "Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope."

The Spirit in tender love sometimes applies a word of Scripture with especial power to the heart. Hope grasps it, feasts upon it, and sweetly reposes. We may in faith bring such texts unto the mercy-seat, and crave their fulfillment. "Do as You have said."

50. "This is my comfort in my affliction; for Your word has quickened me."

Many are the afflictions of the righteous; many, also, are their consolations. Especially sweet are the comforts flowing from the Word. Life thus quickened will be sustained.

51. "The proud have had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from Your law."

Haughty men may scorn and deride. Ridicule shakes not the confidence which the Word has inspired. Can man pull down what God has built up?

52. "I remembered Your judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself."

It is a profitable lesson to ponder God's righteous dealings. The history of the Church is a precious volume. It shows the overthrow of the wicked and constant security of the righteous. Deep streams of comfort flow in these channels.

53. "Horror has taken hold upon me because of the wicked who forsake Your law."

How frightful is the sight of the ungodly trampling on God's precious Word! Who can contemplate the issue without fearful trembling!

54. "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."

Zion's pilgrims are not always downcast. They realize absence from home; but in the cheering prospect of return they know joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

55. "I have remembered Your name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept Your law."

If in the night sleepless hours are appointed, let memory be alert to ponder the wonders involved in the Lord's name. The resolve will thus be quickened to cling tightly to His law.

56. "This I had, because I kept Your precepts."

This rich gain springs from keeping His commandments. May they ever be the treasure of our hearts, the path of our steps, and our exceeding comfort!

57. "You are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep Your words."

Rich, indeed, is the believer. He has the Lord for his portion. He can say, All things are mine, for I am Christ's, and Christ is God's. The kingdom into which he is translated has statutes. He loves them, and delights to cleave most closely to them.

58. "I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; be merciful to me according to Your word."

With earnest sincerity the heart seeks that heavenly favor may never cease to bless. Mercy is abundantly promised, and mercy may be sought with undoubting confidence that it will smile abundantly.

59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies."

No inconsiderate step should ever be allowed; a rash movement may plunge into inextricable straits. The feet should be diligently turned to the narrow way of life. Vigilance should never be relaxed.

60. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments."

Loitering in the Christian course is perilous. Onward, onward should be the constant cry. Lot's wife paused, and then looked back, and perished. Let us lay aside every weight and run unweariedly in the way which love and wisdom have enjoined.

61. "The bands of the wicked have robbed me; but I have not forgotten Your law."

The godly may be called to bear the spoiling of their temporal goods. But they have riches which no robber's hands can touch. The Word is a treasure in which they daily meditate, with no fear of loss.

62. "At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You because of Your righteous judgments."

When sleep fast locked the eyes of others, the Psalmist leaves his bed. He is intent to utter praises. God's righteous judgments call for joyful notice. Thanksgiving is repose of the heart.

63. "I am a companion of all those who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts."

The sincerity of grace is evidenced by the choice of associates. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Light has no fellowship with darkness. The feet cannot at the same time be set in the narrow and in the

broad way. Those who fear God delight in pious fellowship.

64. "The earth, O Lord, is full of Your mercy; teach me Your statutes."

The whole creation has a voice loudly proclaiming that good and gracious is the Lord. Every object reflects tender care. Let us seek enlarged knowledge of His works, so will His ways be our delight. Increased illumination will gladden the meditating heart. Advance in knowledge will be advance in joy.

65. "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according unto Your word."

Where is the believer who can restrain this rapturous acknowledgment! Touched by divine grace he feels that God's goodness baffles all thought. He knows that our God has given largely like a God. All the provisions of the Covenant are bountifully poured into his lap.

66. "Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed Your commandments."

The soul is athirst for brighter rays of light and knowledge. Faith is confessed to be the happy inhabitant of the heart; and the constant cry is, Give large increase. Faith has sweet skill in pleading.

67. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Your word."

Afflictions are often charged to do good work. Their commission is mercy. A thin disguise conceals a friendly form. They check the wanderers and bring them back. In the time of suffering they may be bitter, but in retrospect they are sweet. They lead to holiness, and holiness is joy.

68. "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes."

The believer delights in contemplation of his God. Every view discovers goodness. This is inscribed on all His dealings. Hence the longing desire

for more acquaintance with His statutes. To know His law is to know Himself.

69. "The proud have forged a lie against me; but I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart."

Lying witnesses were obtained to bring false charges against Jesus. If the Head was thus slandered, shall the members escape? But these arch devices are all vain. They lead to closer adherence to God's Word.

70. "Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in Your law."

Their heart swells with pride, and becomes impervious to tender impression. Prosperity often exerts benumbing influence. No sense of sin—no self-abhorrence is its fruit. But there is a lovely contrast. In the believer the contrite heart loathes self-satisfaction, and finds no joy but in clinging to the law of God.

71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Your statutes."

Corrupt nature needs the frequent scourge. The present smart may be severe, but the resulting benefit is more than compensation for the pain. Satisfaction makes rich amends for the sorrows which preceded it. Let not our frowns then meet affliction.

72. "The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

True is the testimony that the Word of the Lord is more to be desired than gold, yes, than much fine gold. This treasure is in our hands. May the Spirit write its contents on our hearts! God's law inscribed there is everlasting wealth.

73. "Your hands have made me, and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments."

Appeal is made to God as our Creator. Every faculty of mind and body is the offspring of His sovereign will. Therefore He who gives our every power is implored to increase spiritual intelligence. In His school blessed lessons are learned.

74. "Those who do not fear will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Your word."

Our course should be so free from ambiguity that it may be evident on what foundation our hopes are built. When those who fear the Lord distinctly see that all our expectations are from Him, they will rejoice in our godly communion.

75. "I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that You in faithfulness have afflicted me."

When afflictions oppress us it is well to remember the smiting hand. Correction is ordered in the Covenant for us. God in these trials acts in accordance with most holy righteousness.

76. "Let, I pray You, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant."

We often need strong consolation. A rich store is laid up for us in our God. To Him let us draw near and pray that all His promises to us in Christ Jesus may be our rich enjoyment.

77. "Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight."

Tender mercy can prolong our days; but continued life should only be desired in submission to God's will, and for the furtherance of His glory. Such will be our desire when our delight is to follow His law as our one rule.

78. "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause; but I will meditate on Your precepts."

Confusion will overwhelm the perverse adversaries. Their persecution is without cause. Harmless will be all their rage when the mind retires into the secret places of holy meditation.

79. "Let those who do not fear turn to me, and those who have known Your testimonies."

The man of God delights only in the fellowship of those who are fellow-servants of His God. They are described as fearing God and intelligently keeping His testimonies. Prayer is made that such may cheer him by their company.

80. "Let my heart be sound in Your statutes, that I may not be ashamed."

Let us ever be watchful over the treachery of our hearts. They are prone to nurture unwholesome desires. But deviation from God's law brings shame. Let us shun it as sure misery. Holiness may boldly raise the head.

81. "My soul faints for Your salvation; but I hope in Your word."

Intense was the Psalmist's desire to realize an interest in God's salvation. Through anxiety he fails in strength, as a deer panting for the waterbrooks. But in weakness hope cheered him. Let us strive for an increase of this precious grace. It will gladden and sustain us.

82. "My eyes fail for Your word, saying, When will You comfort me?"

If comforts seem to tarry long, the eye strained by constant looking becomes weak. Earnest cries wrestle with God for His restoring presence. The sigh is heard, How long shall trouble last? When will Your comforts again revive me?

83. "I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, exhausted with waiting. But I cling to your principles and obey them"

Under the grievous pressure of this trial, the bodily appearance manifests

distress. The shriveled skin loses all sign of moisture. It is dried like a leather vessel in the smoke. But grace still lives and feasts on the banquet of God's word.

84. "How many are the days of Your servant? when will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?"

It is sad when impatient peevishness frets. May the gracious Lord preserve us from such weakness. Under its influence cessation of life is desired; vengeance calls for wrath on the head of persecutors. This is our infirmity. May the Lord pardon it and tear it from our hearts.

85. "The proud have dug pits for me, which are not after Your law."

Haughty persecutors may plot evil against the Lord's followers. Such conduct is enmity to His law. Assuredly it will end in misery.

86. "All Your commandments are faithful; they persecute me wrongfully; help me."

In such trial it is sweet relief to remember that God is true. According to the faithful Word, help will be given, and the persecutors perish in their wickedness.

87. "They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not Your precepts."

At times their cruel plans seem to border on success. Let not the righteous be dismayed. Let the Word be remembered which can never fail.

88. "Quicken me after Your lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Your mouth."

Let prayer be made that God, in the multitude of His lovingkindness, would infuse new life into our drooping hearts. Then upright walking in the Lord's ways will not flag.

89. "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven."

Before the foundations of the world, the purposes of God were firmly settled. As He is stable and immutable, so they cannot change. Therefore floods of peace and trust pervade the believer's heart. Every event flies on the winds of eternal decree.

90. "Your faithfulness is to all generations; You have established the earth, and it abides."

From age to age God's faithfulness shines in unfading brightness. The earth abides in accordance with original design. There is no interruption in its progress. It pursues the course of immutability.

91. "They continue this day according to your ordinances; for all are Your servants."

The course of nature undergoes no departure from primeval will. All things act out the great Creator's plan. His word commands perpetual obedience.

92. "Unless Your law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction."

Afflictions often threaten to overwhelm. Billows upon billows go over the sinking head. But the immutable Word is grasped, and it is found to be a never-failing plank.

93. "I will never forget Your precepts; for with them You have quickened me."

It is our highest wisdom tightly to grasp the Word. Let us set its precepts continually before our eyes. They are life-giving and life-sustaining. Let us enshrine them in our memories.

94. "I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts."

It is a happy moment when the believer can appeal to God, I am Yours. You have called me, and I have obeyed. You have quickened me, and I live to You. All my desire is to know and obey Your will. Therefore I cry to You for aid; save me, for I am Your servant.

95. "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me but I will consider Your testimonies."

I have indeed many foes. Plots are laid for my destruction. But I will not fear. The assurances of Your Word sustain me.

96. "I have seen an end of all perfection; but Your commandment is exceeding broad."

Many objects are full of wonder. They excite admiration. But their beauty is not durable; it quickly fades away. But the glory of God's law suffers no eclipse. The more we ponder, the more cause shall we find for trust and praise.

97. "O how I love Your law! it is my meditation all the day."

Mark the profession of the blessed man. Every affection goes forth in admiration of the law. It is his constant delight. At every moment of the day his heart lovingly feasts on it.

98. "You, through Your commandments, have made me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me."

Where can true wisdom be found but in the counsels of the all-wise and only-wise God! His name and His word are emphatic wisdom. They are the perfection of intelligence. They ever fill the believer's heart. Thus his foes appear as fools before him.

99. "I have more understanding than all my teachers for Your testimonies are my meditation."

The world professes to have schools of sage instruction; but the poorest

believer, enlightened by the Spirit, is wiser than this boasted wisdom. God's testimonies are his meditation. Here he derives celestial understanding.

100. "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts."

The lowliest man who has the Bible in his heart knows more than the sage philosophers of old. True wisdom is acquired in the path of heavenly precepts.

101. "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Your word."

The blessed man maintains an undeviating course of godliness. Let us diligently mark the perilous way of evil. Let us flee from it as from a pitfall. So shall we keep the path of safety and pure joy.

102. "I have not departed from Your judgments; for You have taught me."

Unless we are apt pupils in God's school we shall not clearly see the heavenward road, and quickly shall we be beguiled by error's snares. It is a happy profession, You have taught me. It may be added, Therefore I am above the reach of harm.

103. "How sweet are Your words unto my taste! yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Those who make the law their constant feast find in it delicious relish. The heart is more refreshed than the palate can be by the sweetest luxury that nature knows.

104. "Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

It is a solid truth that understanding is obtained by diligent adherence to

God's precepts. The sure result is hatred of all false ways. May the Lord teach us, and cause us to walk in truth!

105. "Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Our path is often through a cloudy land. Safe guidance is provided in the Word. Those who hold this lamp shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. It will lead to the home in which there is no need of the sun or of the moon to lighten, but the Lord is the light thereof.

106. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Your righteous judgments."

All means should be employed to bind us to unbroken obedience. The vows by which we are consecrated to God's service should stand as a barrier against every straying step. God's covenant of grace is confirmed by oath. Thus, also, should our holy walk be ratified.

107. "I am afflicted very much; quicken me, O Lord, according to Your word."

When afflictions press heavily, the surest relief arises from earnest prayer. Let our petition be for insight into the life-imparting Word.

108. "Accept, I beseech You, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Your judgments."

We should present ourselves, our every faculty and power as a whole burnt-offering to the Lord. But especially, we should bring the calves of our lips. The sacrifice of prayer and praise should never cease. May the Lord of His free grace accept our service! May it be perfumed by the incense of Christ's blood! In this exercise may we advance in heavenly knowledge!

109. "My soul is continually in my hand; yet I do not forget Your law."

The believer counts not his life dear to himself, so that he may finish his

course with joy. He is always in the very jaws of death. He lives with wings outstretched to fly away. Paul testified; I die daily. In the extremity of persecution, the fervent desire was to know what God would have him to do.

110. "The wicked have laid a snare for me; yet I erred not from Your precepts."

No plots of the ungodly can compel deviation from God's law. The right way may seem to be beset with perils, but let it be resolutely chosen. Its end is happiness and peace.

111. "Your testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart."

The possession of God's truth is an inalienable treasure. It enriches with possessions which never can decay, and which no spoiler can remove. It fills with joy unspeakable. It leads to endless glory.

112. "I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes always, even to the end."

It is true that God only can incline the heart, but when He works converting change, adherence to God's will seems to be easy service. It becomes the spontaneous effort of the mind. May we thus find that obedience is our ready pathway to the glorious end, which has no end.

113. "I hate vain thoughts; but I love Your law."

Universal is the corruption implanted by the fall. Every imagination is prone to evil continually. The believer is conscious of this, and deeply bewails. The vanity of his thoughts is regarded with intense hatred. His real love is given to the pure Word.

114. "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word."

The believer has a high fortress in his God. He flees to this hiding-place,

and is safe. When the arrows of the foe unsparingly assail, he finds protection under the shield of God. He faints not, for his hope in God is firm.

115. "Depart from me, you evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God."

The presence of evil men gives intense distress. The believer strives to keep far apart, and to give himself wholly to the works of godliness.

116. "Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope."

Our natural strength is utter feebleness. Unless upheld by a heavenly arm, we cannot but fall. But we may plead the promises. In this way we continue in lively frame. Thus the head looks up in holy confidence.

117. "Hold me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect to Your statutes continually."

There is no safety unless the Lord extends support. May our strength be thus supplied! This help will secure adherence to God's statutes.

118. "You have trodden down all those who err from Your statutes; for their deceit is falsehood."

They cannot escape ruin who wander in devious paths. Divine vengeance is in their rear. They will soon be trampled into perdition. Deceit and falsehood have been their course. The end is misery.

119. "You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Your testimonies."

Utterly worthless are the wicked. They are lighter than the worthless chaff. The Lord will drive them away. They will no more be seen. They are the blessed who take His testimonies for their enriching treasure.

120. "My flesh trembles for fear of You; and I am afraid of Your judgments."

Who can think of the majesty and glory of God, and not lie low in reverential awe! The contemplation of His righteous judgments is an appalling sight, for an angry God is a consuming fire. Blessed are those who are sheltered in Christ Jesus.

121. "I have done judgment and justice; leave me not to my oppressors."

Happy is the conscience which can testify of sincere effort to act uprightly. Such walk leads to protection. Divine grace will uphold. Then the prayer may truly go forth, Leave me not to oppression, I have striven never to oppress.

122. "Be surety for Your servant for good; let not the proud oppress me."

In the provisions of grace God is engaged to uphold His servants, to avert evil, and to rescue them from oppression. Let the humble go forth pleading, Deal with me according to the everlasting Covenant.

123. "My eyes fail for Your salvation, and for the word of Your righteousness."

Believers long with intense desire to realize the joys of salvation. Their eyes are strained in looking for the shining of God's righteous word upon their hearts.

124. "Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes."

In deep confession of misery, faith looks for help only from God's mercy. This mercy never fails. It has no bounds. It never can be sought in vain. Its work is to guide safely in the way of heavenly statutes.

125. "I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies."

It is happiness to draw near to God with humble profession, that He is the Lord to whose service we are willingly consecrated. This is a good plea for light from heaven to direct our paths.

126. "It is time for You, Lord, to work; for they have made void Your law."

When iniquity abounds, and God's law is utterly despised, the time has come for God to arise, and to maintain His own cause. Let us give Him no rest until He banishes all evil.

127. "Therefore I love Your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold."

What are all the treasures of earth, compared with the precious Word of God! The believer knows its value, and he regards all earth's wealth as worthless in comparison.

128. "Therefore I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."

Admiration of God's law should be universal. Every precept should be regarded as a direct voice from heaven. Every opposing word should be rejected as falsehood and deception. May this be the mold in which our hearts are framed!

129. "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them."

Wonderful, indeed, are the revelations of Scripture. They proclaim Him whose name is Wonderful, and who only does wondrous things. The more this Word is studied the stronger will be the effort that the whole life should be framed after its sacred model.

130. "The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."

The fall extinguished spiritual light. Gross darkness beclouded the mind. But when the rays of the Word illuminate, bright understanding sees God and the way of life. How earnest should be the prayer, "Send out Your light and Your truth, that they may lead me!" Thus the simple obtain wisdom.

131. "I opened my mouth and panted; for I longed for Your commandments."

Man gasping by toil and heat is pictured. He pants for the refreshing breeze. Thus the believer thirsts for the reviving comfort of God's Word.

132. "Look upon me, and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name."

God's tender mercies ever beam on those who love Him. The Psalmist professes that such is his state, and prays to be remembered in the household of the saints.

133. "Order my steps in Your word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

It is the believer's constant desire that God would guide his footsteps. He hates iniquity, and prays to be delivered from its thralldom.

134. "Deliver me from the oppression of man; so will I keep Your precepts."

Unless the Lord sends help, cruel men will terribly oppress the godly. But upheld by Him, they will persevere in the righteous precepts.

135. "Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; and teach me Your statutes."

Blessed is the state when heavenly smiles shine sweetly on the heart. This is the very foretaste of the heaven of heavens. Those who enjoy these cheering rays will always long to profit in God's school.

136. "Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not Your law."

Keen is the pain when the godly see God's name profaned, His Word despised, His glory trampled beneath scornful feet. Pious feeling mourns. Streams of sorrow show the intense anguish. Love of God awakens grief when He is despised. May we know this holy sorrow.

137. "Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgments."

It is supreme delight to contemplate the glories of holiness, which, as a halo, shine around our Lord. God is holy in all His attributes and works.

138. "Your testimonies that You have commanded are righteous and very faithful."

Every commandment is the essence of holiness. His every word is the splendor of truth. Let the Scriptures be our constant guide. They will sanctify, and mold the inner man in righteousness.

139. "My zeal has consumed me; because my enemies have forgotten Your words."

Strong feelings are excited in the godly breast when disregard of God's Word is seen. It is the actuating principle of His enemies. The righteous burn with zeal to stop it.

140. "Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it."

The lovely purity of God's Word is wondrous to attract. The godly feel this influence, and delight in it with their whole hearts.

141. "I am small and despised; yet do not I forget Your precepts."

The godly know well their poverty. They often feel that the world regards them with contempt. But these feelings excite warmer desire to be

conformed to the Word of God.

142. "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is the truth."

God's righteousness is exact conformity to His law. The blessed Jesus, in man's nature upon earth, exhibited this righteousness. It is the robe which secures admission into heaven. It is everlasting, and incapable of change or decay.

143. "Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me; yet Your commandments are my delights."

Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward; but no affliction drives the believer from the law which he intensely loves.

144. "The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live."

God's law is immutable. No age brings change. Fully persuaded of this truth, the believer prays to be kept in its knowledge. It leads to eternal life. May it be our chosen guide!

145. "I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord. I will keep Your statutes."

Prayer and profession are here combined. Sweet is the union. May they ever be conjoined in us! True prayer is an exercise in which the whole heart puts forth its utmost energy. Prayers should be heartfelt vows.

146. "I cried to You; save me, and I shall keep Your testimonies."

Faith looks back hopefully on the hours in which prayer has been urgent. It supplicates anew for God's saving hand. It resolves to render faithful service in return.

147. "I rise early, before the sun is up; I cry out for help and put my hope

in your words."

Faith is impatient to reach the mercy-seat. Before the first rays enlighten the east, it hastens to its morning work of prayer. Its hope rests on the promises of the Word.

148. "My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises."

Before the evening shadows darken, it hastens again to the glad employ of holy meditation. Stillness aids the calm delight.

149. "Hear my voice according unto Your lovingkindness; O Lord, quicken me according to Your judgment."

The views of God's lovingkindness are incessant joy. Faith expects much. Its hopes are large, according to the measure of God's goodness.

150. "Those draw near who follow after mischief; they are far from Your law."

Plotters of mischief against God's servants are always near. They hate God's law. We here read the complaint of Jesus. But all malice came to nothing.

151. "You are near, O Lord; and all Your commandments are truth."

The workers of mischief are indeed near, but God is far nearer. His presence is granted according to His promises.

152. "Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever."

It is the immovable persuasion of faith that no word of God's mouth can ever fail. The soul is happy which reposes on this rock. May it be our settled resting place!

153. "Consider my affliction, and deliver me; for I do not forget Your law."

It is our privilege to bring afflictions to the mercy-seat. God is always ready to give ear. Relief will not long tarry. Happy is it when we can add the plea that His law rules within us.

154. "Plead my cause, and deliver me; quicken me according to Your word."

All our adversaries are silenced, when our great Advocate appears on our behalf. We may boldly pray, when we seek only the fulfillment of the Covenant of grace.

155. "Salvation is far from the wicked; for they do not seek Your statutes."

Sure is the destruction of the ungodly. Vengeance, righteously denounced, will righteously be executed. Where can hope be found? God's statutes are rejected. Self-willed rebellion fights only that it may fall.

156. "Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord; quicken me according to Your judgments."

The tender mercies of our God exceed all powers to estimate and praise. We need more love in our hearts. Our affections should more warmly burn. Let earnest prayers invigorate our souls. He gives more grace.

157. "Many are my persecutors and my enemies; yet do I not decline from Your testimonies."

Vain is all the rage and malice of the ungodly when God extends His protecting shield. When the enemy comes in like a flood, may we adhere more steadfastly to the rock of our salvation!

158. "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not Your word."

An ungodly man is the saddest sight on earth. His course is unmixed evil. None gain profit from him. He passes to endless misery. Who can behold and suppress sorrow? This misery results from neglect of God's Word.

159. "Consider how I love Your precepts; quicken me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness."

Happy are those who with pure conscience can call on God to behold their devoted attachment to His Word. But still they bewail their dull and lifeless state, and pray for quickening power.

160. "Your word is true from the beginning; and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."

Truth reigns in every word of Scripture. Its first utterance was true. Truth will pervade it to the end. Let this thought quicken our delight in it. It never can mislead. It will continue to be God's truth through everlasting ages.

161. "Princes have persecuted me without a cause; but my heart stands in awe of Your word."

Exaltation to earth's greatness cannot raise the soul to sanctity. The kings of the earth have often been among the foremost to take counsel against the Lord, and against His Anointed. Such conduct is extreme infatuation. But the godly fear not. Those who stand in awe of God can lightly regard man.

162. "I rejoice at Your word, as one who finds great treasure."

The Word of God is the treasure of treasures. It makes wise unto salvation. It enriches with imperishable wealth. Shall the man rejoice who discovers earthly treasures, and shall he not rejoice who finds the pearl of great price?

163. "I hate and abhor lying; but I love Your law."

Truth is a pure and lovely grace. Let us regard with detestation every deviation from the paths of truth. Let us give our hearts to the law, which is God's truth in the highest.

164. "Seven times a day do I praise You because of Your righteous judgments."

No praise can suffice to give due adoration to the Lord. Let His praises ever be on our lips. In His righteous judgments we shall find unending theme.

165. "Great peace have those who love Your law; and nothing shall offend them."

What can disturb the calm tranquillity of those whose affections revel in the Word of God? They proceed on earth's journey safely; nothing can cause them to fall fatally.

166. "Lord, I have hoped for Your salvation, and done Your commandments."

Here we have the sweet profession of established faith. It rejoices in the full assurance of hope, that God's salvation is its possession. In this glad persuasion the life is conformed to strictest obedience.

167. "My soul has kept Your testimonies; and I love them exceedingly."

The path of godliness is exceeding joy. The more we walk in it the more will delight abound.

168. "I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies for all my ways are before You."

The believer ever realizes that God sees him. He does not want any word or work hidden from his Heavenly Father. May we ever walk in the bright sunshine of His light! Let us call Him to be our constant witness.

169. "Let my cry come near before You, O Lord; give me understanding according to Your word."

The believer's life is prayer. His faith assures him that every supplication will be heard. He feels especially his ignorance. Hence he seeks wisdom from God, who gives liberally and upbraids not.

170. "Let my supplication come before You; deliver me according to Your word."

The prayer is often repeated that in gracious answer deliverance may come. He trusts in the Covenant of grace.

171. "My lips shall utter praise, when You have taught me Your statutes."

Strong is the desire that due praises may be rendered. Hence the constant prayer that heavenly understanding may be given.

172. "My tongue shall speak of Your word; for all Your commandments are righteousness."

Sweet is the conversation when God's Word is the theme. How worthless in comparison are the chatterings of earthly folly!

173. "Let Your hand help me; for I have chosen Your precepts."

Strong is the plea; Lord, You know that deliberately I choose Your way. We may then boldly ask for help, and help will quickly fly to our side.

174. "I have longed for Your salvation, O Lord; and Your law is my delight."

Happy is Jacob's testimony, "I have waited for Your salvation." David similarly professed, "I have longed for Your salvation." Such saints have great delights. Their joy flows from the Word of God.

175. "Let my soul live, and it shall praise You; and let Your judgments help me."

Liveliness of soul is the Spirit's gift, and it will show itself in abounding praises.

176. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant; for I do not forget Your commandments."

The experienced saint is always conscious of his frequent errings. Unless the Good Shepherd seeks the straying sheep, it will wander farther from the fold. Therefore prayer is made to God to restore the soul from devious paths. This prayer is enforced by the profession that God's commandments abide in the heart.

Psalm 121

True safety is from God alone. His protecting care is portrayed in attractive colors. May they win us to place all confidence in Him!

1-2. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

The pious child of Israel turned in devotion to the hill on which the Temple stood. He saw in it a type of Jehovah's presence. The lesson is here taught that all protection comes directly from our Heavenly Father. With confidence let us uplift our eyes to Him. He is the fountain of all grace. He, whose omnipotent word called heaven and earth into existence, can by the same word make all providences to promote His people's good.

3-4. "He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

The believer often moves on slippery ground. Various enemies, also, dash against him. Left to himself, how quickly will he fall! But the Lord upholds him, so he stands as a rock against the lashing billows. The care which preserves him never relaxes its watchful guardianship. The eyes of the Lord, through day and night, from the opening to the closing of the year, are fixed immovably on His waiting people.

5-6. "The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night."

Volumes are contained in the words, The Lord is your keeper. It is re-echoed by the Apostle—We are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal life. They are indeed securely kept who are encircled by their omnipotent God. In their Zionward march they are exposed to scorching rays. But as the pillar of cloud spread sweet refreshment over Israel's hosts, so the Lord wards off the adversary's piercing darts. To His people He is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

7. "The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul."

All strength and joy are included in the promise that God shall preserve us from all evil. The believer may exult in the assurance that all the assaults of Satan and the powers of darkness shall inflict no deadly wound. The soul shall live unharmed. It shall be brought in safety to the heavenly home.

8. "The Lord shall preserve your going out, and your coming in, from this time forth, and even forevermore."

The pilgrimage may seem tedious. We may have many changes. We may be emptied from vessel to vessel. But final rest is secured. Through God's protection, heaven shall be attained. Let us lift up our heads with joy, and shout thanksgivings.

Psalm 127

Safety and success can only come from God. Pious families are multiplied by His blessing.

1. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain."

It is a blessed lesson in the Spirit's school that God's all-ordering hand and all-controlling power direct events. He sits upon the throne of universal sway. Prosperity abounds only as furthered by His will. Failure undermines all efforts which rest not on His sovereign desire. All labor is but nothingness except He commands the blessing. Without Him workmen toil to gain vanity. Guards may surround the city with much show of force, but if the Lord is absent their weapons and vigilance end in defeat. Jesus comforts with the assurance that all power is His in heaven and in earth. Let us flee to Him and cling to Him. Then we shall surely prosper. Adversity can never frown when Jesus smiles.

2. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep."

It is sad when men consume their time and energies in fruitless toil. If God is forgotten, and His aid unsought, the midnight hours and the early dawn are vainly spent in labors. Profitless is all exercise of mind and body if He is excluded who alone dispenses blessings. Shut out the sun, and there is no light. Omit the ball, and empty is the cannon's sound. Let His servants make Him their all, and He will cause them to repose in peace. Tranquil confidence will trust events to His guardian care, and thus sweet calm will soothe the breast.

3-5. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

It is a lovely scene when pious parents sit surrounded by a pious progeny. The happy circle gives evidence that God's favoring smile beams on the family. Heavenly feeling pervades the house. Love of God, faith in the redeeming blood and covering righteousness of Christ, are ruling principles. There is joy in present communion and in anticipation of eternal fellowship. The godly union, also, is strength. No enemies can resist the arrows aimed by a giant hand. Thus foes prevail not over this holy company. No shame or confusion depresses their heads. They boldly meet all adversaries. Who will not serve the blessed Lord, and delight in the heritage which is His people's crown!

Psalm 130

The essence of the Gospel pervades this hymn. Sin is seen in its odious character. Its due penalties are acknowledged. But forgiveness is proclaimed as leading to reverential sense of God's holiness. The soul waits for the Lord, who is rich in mercy and redeeming love, and ready to blot out every iniquity.

1-2. "Out of the depths have I cried to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice; let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications."

The speaker cries in deep sense of sin. Convinced by the Spirit of the appalling evil, he lies in the lowest depths of misery. All the billows of wrath seem to be passing over him. There is no shadow of help but in God. With earnest cries he lifts up the supplicating voice.

3. "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Confession is made of utter ruin. Our natural state is a mass of evil. Thus in ourselves we stand justly exposed to all wrath. Let us continually pray, Enter not into judgment with your servant, O Lord, for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.

4. "But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

The mercy of mercies here shines forth. God appears glorious on redemption's throne. He has provided forgiveness in the cross of Calvary. Christ's precious blood washes out every stain of guilt. His righteousness covers all our transgressions. Who will not love and bless God! Those who love Him cannot but love His holy ways, and dread nothing more than to stray from the Gospel-rule.

5-6. "I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning."

The Lord has promised never to leave or forsake or forget His people. He will visit them with the plenitude of His lovingkindness. He will bless them with the multitude of His tender mercies. For these sweet manifestations the believer continually waits. He looks out from His watchtower as one watching for the morning, who knows that in the appointed time the welcome rays will illumine the eastern sky.

7-8. "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

In great mercy we are called to the full assurance, that our hope in God shall never be disappointed. Reality will surpass all expectation. Mercy sits beside Him on His throne, and ever loves to visit and cheer the ransomed people. The redemption decreed and accomplished is a cup which ever overflows. We cannot exhaust it. It is more than sufficient for all our need. Every sin shall disappear, and we shall be presented before the throne, holy and pure as our Lord is holy and pure. Happy are those who know the Gospel's joyful sound!

Andrew Murray

(1828 - 1917)

Andrew Murray was a a full time minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa where he served for fifty eight years. His influence, however, was not limited to the Dutch Reformed Church. Of the two hundred and fifty books he wrote, some were translated into more than twenty languages and still read and cherished today.

1. Carnal or Spiritual ?
2. Ye Are The Branches
3. Confession of Sin
4. The Lord The Perfecter
5. The Will of God
6. The Word and Prayer
7. True Disciples

Carnal or Spiritual?

“And Peter went out and wept bitterly.” — Luke 22:62 .

These words indicate the turning point in the life of Peter, —a crisis. There is often a question about the life of holiness. Do you grow into it? Or do you come into it by a crisis suddenly? Peter has been growing for three years under the training of Christ, but he had grown terribly downward, for the end of his growing was, he denied Jesus. And then there came a crisis. After the crisis he was a changed man, and then he began to grow aright. We must indeed grow in grace, but before we can grow in grace we must be put right.

You know what the two halves of the life of Peter were. In God’s Word we read very often about the difference between the carnal and the spiritual Christian. The word “carnal” comes from the Latin word for flesh. In Romans viii., and in Gal. v., we are taught that the flesh and the Spirit of God are the two opposing powers by which we are dominated or ruled, and we are taught that a true believer may allow himself to be ruled by the flesh. That is what Paul writes to the Corinthians. In the 3rd chapter, the first four verses, he says, four times to them, “You are carnal, and not spiritual.” And just so a believer can allow the flesh to have so much power over him that becomes “carnal.” Every object is named according to its most prominent characteristic. If a man is a babe in Christ and has a little of the Holy Spirit and a great deal of the flesh, he is called carnal, for the flesh is his chief mark. If he gives way, as the Corinthians did, to strife, temper, division, and envy, he is a carnal Christian. He is a Christian, but a carnal one. But if he gives himself over entirely to the Holy Spirit so that He (the Holy Spirit) can deliver from the temper, the envy, and the strife, by breathing a heavenly disposition; and can mortify the deeds of the body; then God’s Word calls him a “spiritual” man, a true spiritual Christian.

Now, these two styles are remarkably illustrated in the life of Peter. The

text is the crisis and turning point at which he begins to pass over from the one side to the other.

The message that I want to bring to you is this: That the great majority of Christians, alas, are not spiritual men, and that they may become spiritual men by the grace of God. I want to come to all who are perhaps hungering and longing for the better life, and asking what is wrong that you are without it, to point out that what is wrong is just one thing,—allowing the flesh to rule in you, and trusting in the power of the flesh to make you good.

There is a better life, a life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then, I want to tell you a third thing. The first thing is important, take care of the carnal life, and confess if you are in it. The second truth is very blessed, there is a spiritual life; believe that it is a possibility. But the third truth is the most important, —You can by one step get out of the carnal into the spiritual state. May God reveal it to you now through the story of the Apostle Peter!

Look at him, first of all, in the carnal state. What are the marks of the carnal state in him? Self-will, self-pleasing, self-confidence. Just remember, when Christ said to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi, “The Son of Man must be crucified,” Peter said to Him, “Lord, that can never be!” And Christ had to say to him, “Get thee behind Me, Satan!” Dear reader, what an awful thing for Peter! He could not understand what a suffering Christ was. And Peter was so self-willed and self-confident that he dared to contradict and to rebuke Christ! Just think of it! Then, you remember, how Peter and the other disciples, were more than once quarrelling as to who was to be the chief—self-exaltation, self-pleasing;—every one wanted the chief seat in the Kingdom of God. Then again, remember the last night, when Christ warned Peter that Satan had desired to sift him and that he would deny Him; and Peter said twice over, “Lord, if they all deny Thee, I am ready to go to prison and to death.” What self-confidence! He was sure that his heart was right. He loved Jesus, but he trusted himself. “I will never deny my Lord”! Don’t you see the whole of that life of Peter is carnal confidence in himself. In his carnal

pride, in his carnal unlovingness , in the carnal liberty he took in contradicting Jesus, it was all just the life of the flesh. Peter loved Jesus. God had by the Holy Spirit, taught him. Christ had said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." God had taught him that Christ was the Son of God; but with all that, Peter was just under the power of the flesh; and that is why Christ said at Gethsemane, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."—"You are under the power of the flesh, you cannot watch with Me." Dear reader, what did it all lead to? The flesh led not only to the sins I have mentioned, but last of all to the saddest of things, to Peter's actual denial of Jesus. Three times over he told the lie; and once with an oath, "I know not the man." He denied his blessed Lord. That is what it comes to with the life of the flesh. That is Peter.

Now, look in the second place at Peter after he became a spiritual man. Christ had taught Peter a great deal. I think, if you count carefully, you will find some seven or eight times, Christ had spoken to the disciples about humility; He had taken a little child and set him in the midst of them; He had said, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted; He had said that three or four times; He had at the last supper washed their feet; but all had not taught Peter humility. All Christ's instructions were in vain. Remember that now. A man who is not spiritual, though he may read his Bible, though he may study God's Word, cannot conquer sin, because he is not living the life of the Holy Spirit. God has so ordered it, that man cannot live a right Christian life unless he is full of the Holy Ghost. Do you wonder at what I say? Have you been accustomed to think,—"Full of the Holy Ghost, that is what the Apostles had to be on the day of Pentecost; that is what the martyrs and the ministers had to be; but for every man to be full of the Holy Ghost, that is too high"? I tell you solemnly, unless you believe that, you will never become thoroughgoing Christians. I must be full of the Holy Spirit if I am to be a whole-hearted Christian.

Then, note what change took place in Peter. The Lord Jesus led him up to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came from heaven upon him, and what took place? The old Peter was gone, and he was a new Peter. Just read his epistle, and note the keynote of the epistle. "Through suffering to glory."

Peter, who had said, “Of course, Lord, you never can suffer, or be crucified;” Peter, who, to save himself suffering or shame, had denied Christ, —Peter becomes so changed that when he writes his epistle the chief thought is the very thought of Christ, “Suffering is the way to glory.” Do you not see that the Holy Spirit had changed Peter?

And look at other aspects. Look at Peter. He was so weak that a woman could frighten him into denying Christ; but when the Holy Spirit came he was bold, bold, bold to confess his Lord at any cost, was ready to go to prison and to death, for Christ’s sake. The Holy Spirit had changed the man. Look at his views of Divine truth. He could not understand what Christ taught him, he could not take it in. It was impossible before the death of Christ; but on the day of Pentecost how he is able to expound the word of God as a spiritual man! I tell you, beloved, when the Holy Ghost comes upon a man he becomes a spiritual man, and instead of denying his Lord he denies himself, just remember that. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew when Peter had said, “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall never happen that Thou shalt be crucified,” Christ said to Him: “Peter, not only will I be crucified, but you will have to be crucified too. If any man is to be My disciple, let him take up his cross to die upon it, let him deny himself, and let him follow Me.” How did Peter obey that command? He went and denied Jesus! As long as a man, a Christian, is under the power of the flesh, he is continually denying Jesus. You always must do one of the two, you must deny self or you must deny Jesus, and, alas, Peter denied his Lord rather than deny himself. On the other hand, when the Holy Spirit came upon him, he could not deny his Lord, but he could deny himself, and he praised God for the privilege of suffering for Christ.

Now, how did the change come about? The words of my text tell us, —“And Peter went out and wept bitterly.” What does that mean? It means this, that the Lord led Peter to come to the end of himself, to see what was in his heart, and with his self-confidence to fall into the very deepest sin that a child of God could be guilty of; —publicly, with an oath, to deny his Lord Jesus! When Peter stood there in that great sin, the loving Jesus looked upon him, and that look, full of loving reproach, loving pity, pierced like an arrow through the heart of Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly. Praise God, that was the end of self-confident

Peter! Praise God, that was the turning point of his life! He went out with a shame that no tongue can express. He woke up as out of a dream to the terrible reality “I have helped to crucify the blessed Son of God.” No man can fathom what Peter must have passed through that Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. But, blessed be God, on that Sunday Jesus revealed Himself to Peter, we know not how, but “He was seen of Simon;” then in the evening He came to him with the other disciples and breathed peace, and the Holy Spirit upon him; and then, later on, you know how the Lord asked him, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”—three times, until Peter was sorrowful, and said, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” What was it that wrought the transition from the love of the flesh to the love of the Spirit? I tell you, that was the beginning, —“Peter went out and wept bitterly,” with a broken heart, with a heart that would give anything to show its love to Jesus. With a heart that had learned to give up all self-confidence, Peter was prepared for the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

And, now, you can easily see the application of this story. Are there not many just living the life of Peter, of the self-confident Peter as he was? Are there not many who are mourning under the consciousness, “I am so unfaithful to my Lord, I have no power against the flesh, I cannot conquer my temper, I give way just like Peter to the fear of man, of company, for people can influence me and make me do things I do not want to do, and I have no power to resist them? Circumstances get the mastery over me, and I then say and do things that I am ashamed of.”? Is there not more than one, who, in answer to the question, “Are you living as a man filled with the Spirit, devoted to Jesus, following Him, fully giving up all for Him?”—must say with sorrow, “God knows I am not. Alas, my heart knows it.”? You say it, and I come, and I press you with the question, Is not your position, and your character, and your conduct, just like that of Peter? Like Peter, you love Jesus, like Peter you know He is the Christ of God, like Peter you are very zealous in working for Him. Peter had cast out devils in His name, and had preached the gospel, and had healed the sick. Like Peter you have tried to work for Jesus; but Oh! Under it all, isn’t there something that comes up continually? Oh, Christian, what is it? I pray, and I try, and I do long to live a holy life, but the flesh is too strong, and sin gets the better of me, and continually I am

pleasing self instead of denying it, and denying Jesus instead of pleasing Him. Come, all who are willing to make that confession, and let me ask you to look quietly at the other life that is possible for you.

Just as the Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to Peter, He is willing to give the Holy Spirit to you. Are you willing to receive Him? Are you willing to give up yourself entirely as an empty, helpless vessel, to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, to live, to dwell, and to work in you every day? Dear believer, God has prepared such a beautiful and such a blessed life for every one of us, and God as a Father is waiting to see why you will not come to Him and let Him fill you with the Holy Ghost. Are you willing for it? I am sure some are. There are some who have said often, “O God, why can’t I live that life?—Why can’t I live every hour of unbroken fellowship with God?—Why can’t I enjoy what my Father has given me, all the riches of His grace? It is for me He gave it, and why can’t I enjoy it?” There are those who say, “Why can’t I abide in Christ every day, and every hour, and every moment? —Why can’t I have the light of my Father’s love filling my heart all the day long? Tell me, servant of God, what can help me?”

I can tell you one thing that will help you. What helped Peter? “Peter went out and wept bitterly.” It must come with us to a conviction of sin; it must come with us to a real downright earnest repentance, or we never can get into the better life. We must stop complaining and confessing, “Yes, my life is not what it should be, and I will try to do better.” That won’t help you. What will help you? This,—that you go down in despair to lie at the feet of Jesus, and that you begin with a very real and bitter shame to make confession, “Lord Jesus, have compassion upon me! For these many years I have been a Christian, but there are so many sins from which I have not cleansed myself, —temper, pride, jealousy, envy, sharp words, unkind judgments, unforgiving thoughts.” One must say, “There is a friend whom I never have forgiven for what he has said.” Another must say, “There is an enemy whom I dislike, I cannot say that I can love him.” Another must say, “There are things in my business that I would not like brought out into the light of man.” Another must say, “I am led captive by the law of sin and death.” Oh, Christians, come and make confession with shame and say, “I have been bought with the Blood,

I have been washed with the Blood, but just think of what a life I have been living! I am ashamed of it.” Bow before God and ask Him by the Holy Spirit to make you more deeply ashamed, and to work in you that Divine contrition. I pray you take the step at once. “Peter went out and wept bitterly,” and that was his salvation; yes, that was the turning point of his life. And shall we not fall upon our faces before God, and make confession, and get down on our knees under the burden of the terrible load, and say, “I know I am a believer, but I am not living as I should to the glory of my God. I am under the power of the flesh and all the self-confidence, and self-will, and self-pleasing that marks my life.”

Dear Christians, do you not long to be brought nigh unto God? Would you not give anything to walk in close fellowship with Jesus every day? Would you not count it a pearl of great price to have the light and love of God shining in you all the day? Oh, come and fall down and make confession of sin; and, if you will do it, Jesus will come and meet you and He will ask you, “ Lovest thou Me?” And, if you say, “Yes, Lord,” very quickly He will ask again, “ Lovest thou Me?”—and if you say, “Yes, Lord,” again, He will ask a third time, “ Lovest thou Me?”—and your heart will be filled with an unutterable sadness, and your heart will get still more broken down and bruised by the question, and you will say, “Lord, I have not lived as I should, but still I love Thee and I give myself to Thee.” Oh, beloved may God give us grace now, that, with Peter, we may go out, and, if need be, weep bitterly. If we do not weep bitterly,—we are not going to force tears—shall we not sigh very deeply, and bow very humbly, and cry very earnestly, “O God, reveal to me the carnal life in which I have been living: reveal to me what has been hindering me from having my life full of the Holy Ghost”? Shall we not cry, “Lord, break my heart into utter self-despair, and, Oh! Bring me in helplessness to wait for the Divine power, for the power of the Holy Ghost, to take possession and to fill me with a new life given all to Jesus?”

Ye Are The Branches

Everything depends on our being right in Christ. If I want good apples, I must have a good apple tree. If I care for the health of the apple tree, the apple tree will give me good apples. And it is just so with our Christian life and work. If our life with Christ is right, all will come out right. Instruction and suggestion and help and training in the different departments of the work may be needed; all that has value. But in the long run, the greatest essential is to have the full life in Christ—in other words, to have Christ in us, working through us. I know how much there is to disturb us, or to cause anxious questionings. But the Master has such a blessing for every one of us and such perfect peace and rest. He has such joy and strength if we can only come into, and be kept in, the right attitude toward Him.

I will take my text from the parable of the Vine and the Branches, in John, chapter fifteen, verse five: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Especially these words: "Ye are the branches."

What a simple thing it is to be a branch, the branch of a tree, or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine, or out of the tree, and there it lives and grows and, in due time, bears fruit. It has no responsibility except to receive sap and nourishment from the root and stem. And if only we knew, by the Holy Spirit, about our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing on earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. For, is it not true that often our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work that He has to do in me, and I for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work, and not enough time for close communion with Jesus. He complains that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his many conversations with men darken the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the

bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the vine! That must be because we have looked on our work as something other than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false thought about the Christian life.

Now, just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life.

ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE

In the first place, it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing; it just depends on the vine for everything. Absolute dependence is one of the most solemn and precious of thoughts. A great German theologian wrote two large volumes some years ago to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. Another great writer has said that absolute, unalterable dependence upon God alone is the essence of the religion of angels. It should also be that of men. God is everything to the angels, and He is willing to be everything to the Christian. If I can learn to depend on God every moment of the day, everything will come right. You will receive the higher life if you depend absolutely on God.

Now, here we find it with the vine and the branches. Every vine you ever see, or every bunch of grapes that come to your table, let it remind you that the branch is absolutely dependent on the vine. The vine has to do the work, and the branch enjoys the fruit of it.

What has the vine to do? It has to do a great work. It has to send its roots out into the soil and hunt under the ground-the roots often extend a long way out-for nourishment, and to drink in the moisture. Put certain elements of manure in certain directions, and the vine sends its roots there. Then, its roots or stems turn the moisture and manure into that special sap which makes the fruit that is borne. The vine does the work, and the branch has just to receive the sap from the vine. The sap is then changed into grapes. I have been told that at Hampton Court, London, there was a vine that sometimes bore a couple of thousand bunches of grapes. People were astonished at its large growth and rich fruitage. Afterward, the cause was discovered. The Thames River flows nearby, so

the vine had stretched its roots hundreds of yards under the ground until it had come to the riverside. There, in all the rich slime of the riverbed, it had found rich nourishment, and obtained moisture. The roots had drawn the sap all that distance up and up into the vine. As a result, there was the abundant, rich harvest. The vine had the work to do, and the branches had just to depend on the vine and receive what it gave.

Is that literally true of my Lord Jesus? Must I understand that when I have to work, when I have to preach a sermon or address a Bible class or go out and visit the poor, neglected ones, that all the responsibility of the work is on Christ? That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must care for all. And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit-not now and then only as a special gift. But remember, the relationship between the vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, the living connection is maintained. The sap does not flow for a time, and then stop, and then flow again. Instead, moment to moment, the sap flows from the vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker. Morning by morning and day by day and hour by hour and step by step-in every work-I have to go out to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing. I must be as one who is nothing, and can do nothing. Oh, beloved workers, study that word nothing. You sometimes sing: "Oh, to be nothing, nothing"; but have you really studied that word and prayed every day and worshipped God in the light of it? Do you know the blessedness of that word nothing?

If I am something, then God is not everything; but when I become nothing, God can become all. The everlasting God in Christ can reveal Himself fully. That is the higher life. We need to become nothing. Someone has well said that the seraphim and cherubim are flames of fire because they know they are nothing, and they allow God to put His fullness and His glory and brightness into them. Oh, become nothing in deep reality, and, as a worker, study only one thing-to become poorer and lower and more helpless, that Christ may work all in you.

Workers, here is your first lesson: learn to be nothing, learn to be helpless. The man who has got something is not absolutely dependent. But the man who has got nothing is absolutely dependent. Absolute dependence on God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine. You and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus.

DEEP RESTFULNESS

But second, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but also of deep restfulness.

That little branch, if it could think, feel, and speak, and if we could say: "Come, branch of the vine, I want to learn from you how I can be a true branch of the living Vine," what would it answer? The little branch would whisper: "Man, I hear that you are wise, and I know that you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ's work, you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine, I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought or care. The vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when summer came, I had no care; and in the great heat, I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

You say: "Won't that make me slothful?"

I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest on the living Christ can become slothful. The closer your contact with Christ, the more the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you. But, oh, begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to that deep restfulness. A

man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent on Christ, but he worries himself about this absolute dependence. He tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day.

In Thy strong hand I lay me down.

So shall the work be done;

For who can work so wondrously

As the Almighty One?

Workers, take your place every day at the feet of Jesus, in the blessed peace and rest that come from the knowledge- I have no care, my cares are His! I have no fear, He cares for all my fears.

Come, children of God, and understand that it is the Lord Jesus who wants to work through you. You complain of the lack of fervent love. It will come from Jesus. He will give the divine love in your heart with which you can love people. That is the meaning of the assurance: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5); and of that other word: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Christ can give you a fountain of love so that you cannot help loving the most wretched and the most ungrateful, or those who have wearied you. Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength. You do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: "There is a man arguing and striving with me." But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you-the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and the rest and holiness of heaven-that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak.

MUCH FRUITFULNESS

But third, the branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness.

The Lord Jesus Christ repeated the word fruit often in that parable. He

spoke, first, of fruit, and then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). In the first place, Christ said: "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman" (John 15:1). God will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches. It is in the power of God through Christ that we are to bear fruit.

Oh, Christians, you know this world is perishing for lack of workers. And it lacks more than workers. Many workers are saying, some more earnestly than others: "We need not only more workers, but we need our workers to have a new power a different life-so that we workers would be able to bring more blessing." Children of God, I appeal to you. You know what trouble you take, say, in a case of sickness. You have a beloved friend apparently in danger of death, and nothing can refresh that friend so much as a few grapes. But, they are out of season. Still, what trouble you will take to get the grapes that are to be the nourishment of this dying friend! And, there are people around who never go to church, and so many who go to church, but do not know Christ. And yet, the heavenly grapes-the grapes of the heavenly Vine-are not to be had at any price except as the child of God bears them out of his inner life in fellowship with Christ. Except the children of God are filled with the sap of the heavenly Vine, except they are filled with the Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus, they cannot bear much of the real heavenly grape. We all confess there is a great deal of work, a great deal of preaching, teaching, and visiting, a great deal of machinery, and a great deal of earnest effort of every kind. But, there is not much manifestation of the power of God in it.

What is wanting? The close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine is lacking. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings that He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But "Ye are the branches," and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ.

Do not confuse work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek for work

only. Oh! study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life, power, spirit, and love within the heart of the Son of God. It means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your hearts and mine.

You know there are different sorts of grapes, each with a different name. Every vine provides exactly that peculiar aroma and juice which gives the grape its particular flavor and taste. Just so, there is in the heart of Christ Jesus a life, a love, a Spirit, a blessing, and a power for men, that are entirely heavenly and divine, and that will come down into our hearts. Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say: "Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through You, nothing less than the Spirit of Your divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray, let Your Spirit flow through me in all my work for You." I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the life of the heavenly Vine. What you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you want nothing more than that. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the branch, so expect Christ to give His own Holy Spirit into your heart. Then you will bear much fruit. Perhaps you have only begun to bear fruit, and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable, "more fruit," "much fruit." Remember, that in order for you to bear more fruit, you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart.

We ministers of the Gospel, how we are in danger of getting into a condition of work, work, work! And we pray over it, but the freshness, buoyancy, and joy of the heavenly life are not always present. Let us seek to understand that the life of the branch is a life of much fruit, because it is a life rooted in Christ, the living, heavenly Vine.

CLOSE COMMUNION

And fourth, the life of the branch is a life of close communion.

Let us again ask: What has the branch to do? You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used-Abide. Your life is to be an abiding

life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the vine, abiding every minute of the day. The branches are in close communion, in unbroken communion, with the vine, from January to December. And can I not live every day-it is to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question-in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine?

You say: "But I am so occupied with other things."

You may have ten hours' hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things. God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain. It is the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free, the consciousness will come: "Blessed Jesus, I am still in You." If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and to get into this abiding contract with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come. What is the application to our life of this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who do long for the higher life, and who sometimes have received a great blessing. I am sure there are those who have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness. Yet, after a time, it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that, if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Oh! how many Christians look on it as a burden and a tax, a duty and a difficulty, to often be alone with God! That is the great hindrance to our Christian life everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God. I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches-branches into which the heavenly sap can flow-unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him, and to give Him time everyday to work in you, and to keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He

cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him. Let every heart say: "O Christ, it is this I long for. It is this I choose." And He will gladly give it to you.

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

And then finally, the life of the branch is a life of absolute surrender.

These words, absolute surrender, are great and solemn. I believe we do not fully understand their meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it. "Have you anything to do, little branch, besides bearing grapes?" "No, nothing."

"Are you fit for nothing?"

Fit for nothing! The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen. It is fit for nothing but to be burned. "And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relationship to the vine?" "My relationship is just this: I am utterly given up to the vine, and the vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I am, at its disposal, and the vine can do with me what it likes."

Oh, friends, we need this absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The more I speak, the more I feel that this is one of the most difficult points to make clear. It is also one of the most important and needful points to explain what this absolute surrender is. It is often an easy thing for a man or a number of men to come out and offer themselves up God for entire consecration, saying: "Lord, it is my desire to give myself up entirely to You." That is of great value, and often brings very rich blessing. But the one question I ought to study quietly is: What is meant by absolute surrender?

It means that, as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some think so. Some think that can never be. They cannot believe that just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure,

and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His own Spirit into us. He came to help us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did. Oh, beloved brethren, if that is the case, then I ought to say: "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the vine, by God's grace, I would have it to be true of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Ah! here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own Christianity. A man thinks: "I have my business and family duties, and my responsibilities as a citizen. All this I cannot change. And now alongside all this, I am to take Christianity and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!"

This is not right. When Christ came, He bought the sinner with His blood. If there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I would take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings. He would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all day. And if he were a faithful slave, he would live as having no will and no interests of his own. His one care would be to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought—How can I please my Master? Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek God's blessing while we live in our own will. We desire to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work. Then, we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and make sure that sin will not conquer us too much, and that we will not go too far wrong. We ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relationship to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal. Every day we are to come to Him humbly and straightforwardly and say: "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Your will, that has not been ordered by You, or that is not entirely given up to You?"

Oh, if we could wait patiently, I tell you what the result would be. A

relationship between us and Christ would spring up. It would be so close and so tender that afterward we would be amazed at how we formerly could have lived with the idea: "I am surrendered to Christ." We would feel how distant our fellowship with Him had previously been. We would understand that He can, and does indeed, come and take actual possession of us, and give us unbroken fellowship all day. The branch calls us to absolute surrender.

Now I do not speak so much about the giving up of sins. There are people who need that, people who have got violent tempers, bad habits, and actual sins which they from time to time commit, and which they have never given up into the very bosom of the Lamb of God. I pray you, if you are branches of the living Vine, do not keep one sin back. I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness. I know that all do not think exactly the same with regard to it. To me, that would be a matter of comparative indifference if I could see that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are often compromises in hearts, with the idea that we cannot be without sin. There are those who think that we must sin a little every day; we cannot help it. Oh, that people would actually cry to God: "Lord, do keep me from sin!" Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin.

There is a great deal in our work, in our church, and in our surroundings that we found in the world when we were born into it. It has grown all around us and we think that it is all right, that it cannot be changed. We do not come to the Lord Jesus and ask Him about it. Oh! I advise you, Christians, bring everything into relationship with Jesus, and say: "Lord, everything in my life has to be in most complete harmony with my position as a branch of You, the blessed Vine."

Let your surrender to Christ be absolute. I do not understand that word surrender fully. It gets new meanings every now and then. It enlarges immensely from time to time. But I advise you to speak it out: "Absolute surrender to You, Oh Christ, is what I have chosen." And Christ will show you what is not according to His mind, and lead you on to deeper and higher blessedness.

In conclusion, let me gather up all in one sentence. Christ Jesus said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." In other words: "I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. It is impossible to trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power."

You are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness that you are not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch-not closely linked with Jesus, not living in Him as you should be-then listen to Him say: "I am the Vine; I will receive you. I will draw you to Myself; I will bless you. I will strengthen you; I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches. I have given Myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself as God absolutely to you. I became man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? Oh, let it be prayer from the depths of our heart, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us closely to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, will so link each of us to Himself that we will go away with our hearts singing: "He is my Vine, and I am His branch-I want nothing more-now that I have the everlasting Vine."Then, when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him; praise and trust Him; love Him and wait for His love. "You are my Vine, and I am Your branch. It is enough; my soul is satisfied."

Glory to His blessed name!

Confession of Sin

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9.

Too often the confession of sin is superficial, and often it is quite neglected. Few Christians realize how necessary it is to be in earnest about the matter, or feel that an honest confession of sin gives power to live the life of victory over sin. In fellowship with the Lord Jesus we need to confess with a sincere heart every sin that may be a hindrance in our Christian lives.

Listen to what David says, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee... I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin... Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance..." Psalm 32:5-7. David speaks of a time when he was unwilling to confess his sin. "When I kept silence... thy hand was heavy upon me." (Psalm 32:3,4). But when he had confessed his sin, a wonderful change came.

Confession means not only that I confess my sin with shame, but that I hand it over to God, trusting Him to take it away. Such a confession implies that I am wholly unable to get rid of my guilt, but by an act of faith I depend on God to deliver me. This deliverance means in the first place that I know my sins are forgiven, and secondly, that Christ undertakes to cleanse me from the sin, and keep me from its power.

O Christian, if you are seeking to have fellowship with Jesus, do not fear to confess each sin in the confident assurance that there is deliverance. Let there be a mutual understanding between the Lord Jesus and yourself that you will confess each sin, and obtain forgiveness. Then you will know your Lord as Jesus Who saves His people from their sin. Believe that there is great power in the confession of sin, for the burden of sin is borne by our Lord and Savior.



The Lord The Perfecter

"I will cry unto God most High; unto God that performeth all things for me" Psalm 57:2.

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" Psalm 138:8.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" Philippians 1:6.

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: To whom be glory for ever" Romans 11:36.

We read that David once succumbed to unbelief, and said, "I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul" (1 Samuel 27:1). So even the Christian may indeed fear that he will one day perish. This is because he looks at himself and what is in him, and does not set his trust wholly on God. It is because he does not yet know God as the Perfecter. He does not yet know what is meant by His name, "I am the Alpha and the Omega: the Beginning and the End: the First and the Last" (Revelation 21:6; 1:8). If I truly believe in God as the beginning out of whom all comes, then I must trust Him as the continuation and the end, to whom all goes.

God is the beginning. "He which hath begun a good work in you"; "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). We are to be thankful for God's free choice, made before the foundation of the world, that we became believers and have the new life.¹ Those who are still unconverted have nothing to do with this election--for them there is the offer of grace and the summons to surrender.

Outside, over the door of the Father, stands the inscription, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). This everyone can see and understand. No sooner are they inside the door than they see and understand the other inscription, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" (John 6:37).² Then they can understand how all things are of God--first, obedience to the command of God, then, insight into the counsel of God.

But then it is of great importance to firmly hold onto this truth--He has begun the good work. Every thought of God will strengthen the confidence that He will also perfect it. His faithfulness, His love, His power, are all pledged so that He will perfect the good work which He began. Please read how God has taken more than one oath regarding His unchangeable faithfulness. Your soul will rest and find courage in this.

And how will He finish His work? What has its origin from Him is sustained by Him. It will one day be brought to Him and His glory. There is nothing in your life, worldly or spiritual, for which the Father will not care, because it has influence on you for eternity.³ There is no moment of day or night in which the silent growth of your soul is not to go forward. The Father will take care of this, if you believe.

There is no part of your destiny as a child of God that the Father will not continue and complete His work in--even in things which you have not yet given thought to.⁴ There is one condition--you must trust Him for this. You must in faith allow Him to work. You must trustfully say, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." You must trustfully pray, "I will cry unto God that performeth all things for me." Christian, let your soul become full of the thought--The whole care, for the continuation and the perfecting of God's work in me, is in His hands.⁵

And how glorious the perfecting will be. In our spiritual life, God is prepared to exhibit His power in making us participants of His holiness and the image of His Son. He will make us fit, and set us in a condition for all the blessed work in His Kingdom that He would have from us. He will make our body like to the glorious body of His Son. We may wait for the coming of the Son Himself from heaven to take His own to Him. He will unite us in one body with all His chosen, and will receive and make us dwell forever in His glory. How can we think that God will not perfect His work'? He will surely do it He will gloriously do it--for everyone who trusts Him for it.

Child of God, please say in deep assurance of faith, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." In every need say continually and

with great boldness, "I will call on God, that performeth all things for me." And let the song of your life be the joyful doxology, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: To Him be the glory for ever." Amen.

Lord God, who will perfect that which concerns me, teach me to know You and to trust You. And let every thought of the new life go hand in hand with the joyful assurance--He who began a good work in me will perfect it. Amen.

The Will of God

"Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven" Matthew 6:10.

The glory of heaven, where the Father dwells, is that His will is done there. He who wants to taste the blessedness of heaven must know the Father who is there, and do His will, as it is done in heaven.¹

Heaven is an unending holy Kingdom, of which the throne of God is the central point. Around this throne there are innumerable multitudes of pure, free beings, all ordered under powers and dominions. An indescribably rich and many-sided activity fills their life. All the highest and noblest that keeps man occupied is but a faint shadow of what takes place in this heavenly world. All these beings possess their free personal will. However, the will has, by its own choice, become one with the holy will of the Father, so that, in the midst of a diversity that flashes out in a million forms, only one will is accomplished--the will of God. All the rich, blessed movement of the inhabitants of heaven has its origin and its aim in the will of God.

And why is it then that His children on earth do not regard this will as their highest joy? Why is it that the petition, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," is often coupled with thoughts of the severe, trying elements in the will of God? Why is it coupled with thoughts of the impossibility of our continually rejoicing in God's will? It is because we do not take pains to know the will of God in its glory and beauty. It is also because we do not know His will as the origin of love, as the source of power and joy, and as the expression of the perfection of God. We think of God's will only in the law that He gave and that we cannot keep, or in the trials in which His will appears in conflict with our own. Let us no longer do this, but take pains to understand that, in the will of God, all His love and blessedness can be comprehended and understood by us.²

Hear what the Word says about the will of God and the glorious things that are destined for us in this Will.

"This is the will of my Father, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life" (John 6:40). The will of God is the rescue of sinners by faith in Christ. He who surrenders himself to this glorious will to seek souls will have the assurance that God will bless his work to others--for he carries out God's will, even as Jesus did it.3

"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14). The will of God is the maintenance, the strengthening, and the keeping of the weakest of His children. What courage will he have who unites himself cordially with this will!

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). With His whole heart, with all the power of His will, God is willing to make us holy. If we but open our heart and believe that it is not the law, but the will of God-- something He certainly gives and does if we permit Him--then we will rejoice that our sanctification is stable and sure.4

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A joyful, thankful life is what God has destined for us and is what He will work in us. That which He desires, He certainly does for those who do not resist Him but receive and allow His will to work in them.

We must surrender our spirit to be filled with the thought what God would have He will certainly bring to pass when we do not resist Him. And if we further consider how glorious and good and perfect the will of God is, then we will yield ourselves wholeheartedly so that this will may find its accomplishment in us.5

To this end, let us believe that the will of God is His love. Let us see what blessings in the Word are connected with the doing of this will.6 Let us think of the glory of heaven as consisting of doing God's will, and make the choice that our life on earth will be in accordance with that will. And let us with prayer and meditation permit ourselves to be led by the Spirit to know this will completely.7

When we have learned to know the will of God on its glorious heavenly

side in the Word-and have done it--it will not be difficult for us to also bear this will where it appears to be contrary to our nature. We will be so filled with the adoration of God and His will, that we will resolve to see and approve and love this will in everything. And it will be the most glorious thought of our life that there is to be nothing, nothing, in which the will of God must not be known and honored.8

Father, this was the glory of the Lord Jesus, that He did not do His own will, but the will of His Father. This glory I desire to have as mine. Father, open my eyes and my heart to know the perfection, the glory of Your will, and the glory of a life in this will. Teach me to understand Your will correctly, then willingly and cheerfully to execute it. When it becomes difficult for me, teach me to do Your will with loving adoration. Amen.

The Word And Prayer

"Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word." - Psalm 119:107.

Prayer and the Word of God are inseparable, and should always go together in the quiet time of the inner chamber. In His Word God speaks to me; in prayer I speak to God. If there is to be true communication, dialogue, and intimacy, God and I must both take part.

If I simply pray, without using God's Word, I am likely to use my own words and thoughts. When I take God's thoughts from His Word, and present them before Him when I pray, this gives the prayer its power. Then I am enabled to pray according to God's Word. How indispensable God's Word is for all true prayer!

When I pray, I must seek to know God properly. It is through the Word that the Holy Spirit gives me right thoughts of Him. The Word will also teach me how wretched and sinful I am. It reveals to me all the wonders that God will do for me, and the strength He will give me to do His will. The Word teaches me how to pray--with strong desire, with a firm faith, and with constant perseverance. The Word teaches me not only what I am, but what I may become through God's grace. And above all, it reminds me each day that Christ is the great Intercessor, and allows me to pray in His Name.

O Christian, learn this great lesson, to renew your strength each day in God's Word, and so pray according to His will.

Then we turn to the other side that is prayer. We need prayer when we read God's Word--prayer to be taught of God to understand His Word, prayer that through the Holy Spirit I may rightly know and use God's Word,--prayer that I may see in the Word that Christ is all in all, and will be all in me.

Blessed inner chamber, where I may approach God in Christ through the Word and prayer. There I may offer myself to God and His service, and

**be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, so that His love may be shed abroad
in my heart, and I may daily walk in that love.**

True Disciples

Herein is My Father Glorified, that Ye Bear Much Fruit: So Shall Ye Be My Disciples—John 15.8

And are those who do not bear much fruit not disciples? They may be, but in a backward and immature stage. Of those who bear much fruit, Christ says: “These are My disciples, such as I would have them be—these are true disciples.” Just as we say of someone in whom the idea of manliness is realized: That is a man! So our Lord tells who are disciples after His heart, worthy of the name: Those who bear much fruit. We find this double sense of the word disciple in the Gospel. Sometimes it is applied to all who accepted Christ’s teaching. At other times it includes only the inner circle of those who followed Christ wholly, and gave themselves to His training for service. The difference has existed throughout all ages. There have always been a smaller number of God’s people who have sought to serve Him with their whole heart, while the majority have been content with a very small measure of the knowledge of His grace and will.

And what is the difference between this smaller inner circle and the many who do not seek admission to it? We find it in the words: much fruit. With many Christians the thought of personal safety, which at their first awakening was a legitimate one, remains to the end the one aim of their religion. The idea of service and fruit is always a secondary and very subordinate one. The honest longing for much fruit does not trouble them. Souls that have heard the call to live wholly for their Lord, to give their life for Him as He gave His for them, can never be satisfied with this. Their cry is to bear as much fruit as they possibly can, as much as their Lord ever can desire or give in them.

Bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples—Let me beg every reader to consider these words most seriously. Be not content with the thought of gradually doing a little more or better work. In this way it may never

come. Take the words, much fruit, as the revelation of your heavenly Vine of what you must be, of what you can be. Accept fully the impossibility, the utter folly of attempting it in your strength. Let the words call you to look anew upon the Vine, an undertaking to live out its heavenly fullness in you. Let them waken in you once again the faith and the confession: “I am a branch of the true Vine; I can bear much fruit to His glory, and the glory of the Father.”

We need not judge others. But we see in God’s Word everywhere two classes of disciples. Let there be no hesitation as to where we take our place. Let us ask Him to reveal to us how He ask and claims a life wholly given up to Him, to be as full of His Spirit as He can make us. Let our desire be nothing less than perfect cleansing, unbroken abiding, closest communion, abundant fruitfulness—true branches of the true Vine.

The world is perishing, the church is failing, Christ’s cause is suffering, Christ is grieving on account of the lack of wholehearted Christians, bearing much fruit. Though you scarce see what it implies or how it is to come, say to Him that you are His branch to bear much fruit; that you are ready to be His disciple in His own meaning of the word.

My disciples. Blessed Lord, much fruit is the proof that Thou the true Vine hast in me a true branch, a disciple wholly at Thy disposal. Give me, I pray Thee, the childlike consciousness that my fruit is pleasing to Thee, what Thou countest much fruit.

G. Campbell Morgan

(1863–1945)

He was born in Tetbury, England, and was the son of a Baptist minister. At the age of 13, he preached his first sermon. At age 15 he was preaching regularly in country chapels on Sundays and holidays.

He was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1890. His reputation as preacher and Bible expositor grew throughout England and eventually spread to the United States.

- 1. Are we really Christ's?**
- 2. Holiness and Righteousness**
- 3. Holiness is a life of usefulness**
- 4. Holiness: It's Conditions**
- 5. Holiness: It's Fruit**
- 6. True Love Waits on God**
- 7. Doing God's Work is Solemn Business**



Are we really Christ's?

Are we really Christ's? Have we believed into His name , and received absolution? Then He calls us His own; then we are the temple of the Holy Spirit; then the Holy Spirit is at this moment dwelling within us. We may be locking up certain chambers of the temple from the administration and arbitration of the Spirit, but we are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Hear the great promise, "I will dwell in them," the resident God; "and walk in them," the active Deity; "and I will be their God," the governing One. These are the promises of God, and these things the apostle wrote, not to a company of men and women who were living on the highest height of Christian experience, but to a church of men and women who were sadly and awfully failing.

When next, in the hour of stress and temptation, we are tempted to declare that it is not possible to live the holy life, let us remember this, "We are the temple of the living God." We must find some other reason for our failure, for there is no reason why we should fail if we are submitted to that Indweller.

Holiness and Righteousness

These two words, holiness and righteousness, mark two aspects of one condition. Holiness has to do with character; righteousness with conduct. They cannot possibly be separated from each other. They are as 'intimately related as are root and fruit. There can be no fruit unless there be a root. If there be living root it must issue in fruit. There can be no righteousness unless there is holiness; holiness must issue in righteousness. Holiness describes being; righteousness describes doing.

Let us, then, consider this subject of holiness according to New Testament teaching. It is a very remarkable fact that thousands of the saints of God are a little afraid of the word "holiness." I believe a great many Christian people keep away from all sorts of conventions and conferences because of this fear. It is not very long since a very dear friend of mine, a Christian man, said to me, You know, I don't believe in holiness. I told him how very sorry I was to hear it, because the Bible says that without holiness no man can see the Lord, Of course, he did not mean quite what he said. I have quoted it only to indicate the attitude toward this great word, and this great subject, which is alarmingly prevalent in the Christian Church.

I recognize the reason of this fear. A great many unholy things have been said and done by those who perhaps have been loudest in their attempt to explain, and in their claim to the experience of holiness.

Holiness is a Life of Usefulness

The unalterable and unchanging purpose of God is the accomplishment of His purposes through His people. That is rendered possible through holiness of character. Cleansed vessels are the vessels that Jehovah makes use of. "Be ye clean ye that bear the vessels of the Lord," was the word of the Hebrew prophet. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing," is the word of the Christian apostle. It is through holiness of character that I become a vessel ready to the hand of God for the accomplishment of His will.

Surrendered instruments are those which He employs. Not only is it true that clay cannot say to the potter, What formest thou? It is true that the instrument through which he will form and fashion the clay must be plastic in his hand even as the clay is. Believing souls He trusts. The measure of my confidence in Him is the measure of His confidence in me. Let me put that in this form. Are you a man that God can trust? You are if you are a man who can trust God. Trust, again let me remind you, is not merely singing the song that declares your confidence, but it is the life of obedience that relies on God. "He made known His ways unto Moses," gave him the program of events; "His acts unto the children of Israel"; they had to wait and walk step by step. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Has God ever told you a secret, something in your inner life that has become a flaming, fiery passion? You spoke of it and the world crucified you for doing it.

The men to whom God has whispered His secrets of ultimate purpose and present plan are men absolutely at His disposal, and they have had to suffer in the world, but by their suffering the Kingdom is coming. If I want to find a highway along which God is moving toward ultimate victory I shall follow the tracks where I discover the blood of martyrs. He can tell me His secret

**only as I trust Him wholly.
Are we really Christ's?**

Are we really Christ's? Have we believed into His name , and received absolution? Then He calls us His own; then we are the temple of the Holy Spirit; then the Holy Spirit is at this moment dwelling within us. We may be locking up certain chambers of the temple from the administration and arbitration of the Spirit, but we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Hear the great promise, "I will dwell in them," the resident God; "and walk in them," the active Deity; "and I will be their God," the governing One. These are the promises of God, and these things the apostle wrote, not to a company of men and women who were living on the highest height of Christian experience, but to a church of men and women who were sadly and awfully failing. When next, in the hour of stress and temptation, we are tempted to declare that it is not possible to live the holy life, let us remember this, "We are the temple of the living God." We must find some other reason for our failure, for there is no reason why we should fail if we are submitted to that Indweller.

Holiness: It's Conditions

No man imagines it is possible to live the holy life if he is resolutely keeping sin in his life, something in his habits, his home, or his business. We know that these things grieve the Lord. We excuse them, and holiness is never perfected, and we lack the grace and loveliness of character which ought to be the testimony to the power of our Lord because we have not yet begun to be determined to renounce the hidden things of darkness and to put out of our lives the things that are unlike our Master.

Do we desire the holy life? Here are the conditions. Conviction He gives. That we are to respond to by the faith that renounces evil, puts away sin, abandons the life to Him. Holiness is not realized by my endeavor, but by His working in me, when I have given Him His chance. May God lead every one of us not merely to conviction, but to the faith that renounces the things He disapproves, and surrenders to Him all that is His by the indwelling of His Spirit.

Holiness: It's Fruit

Holiness results in the passing of all the distinctive excellencies of Christianity from the realm of theory into that of experience. The ideal which we have seen and admired will become the real in actual life, in the measure in which we are holy in character. I am conscious that such a statement may make it appear as though holiness were the privilege of the few, rather than the possible experience of all who share the life of Christ.

There are one or two simple things which therefore need to be clearly stated at this point. First there can be no holiness save by the work of the Holy Spirit in the life. Second, granted the work of the Spirit, the normal Christian life is holy life, and the measure in which we fail of holiness is the measure in which we fail of Christianity. Yet here again extreme care is necessary. I would not have that misinterpreted to the discouragement of any struggling soul. I do not deny your Christianity any more than I deny my own, because neither you nor I have yet realized the character of holiness in all its fulness; yet you will admit, if you think carefully, that the measure in which we lack holiness is the measure in which we lack the true normal Christian character.

Holiness is not the preserve of an aristocracy in the family of God, in our ordinary sense of that word "aristocracy." The whole family of God is an aristocracy, or ought to be. Aristocracy, what does it mean? Forgive me if I am elementary enough to remind you that the root significance of the word is best strength. That is what an aristocracy ought to be, and the best strength of the world ought to be the Christian men and women of the world. Holiness as a blessing, second or otherwise, is not the privilege of a select or elect few. It is the normal life of the Christian, according to the purpose and power of God.

Holiness is not ultimate perfection. Holiness is the condition which makes it possible for us to "grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head." Holiness is not perfection of consummation.

It is simply health in the spiritual life.

True Love Waits on God

For those who thus wait, God works; and as surely as men wait for Him while He works for them, there will come to them, presently, the clarion call to arise and cooperate. When it comes, the plan is almost invariably a different one from that which had been expected. "In ways we looked not for," said the prophet, "Thou hast wrought for us in the past." Is not that the history of every forward movement in the economy of God? A period of darkness, a period of desolation, a period of difficulty in which His people were brought to the point of knowing that they did not know and understanding that they could not understand. A period of being clever enough to be done with their own cleverness, and then, while they waited, a period of adjusting their lives to God, severing all ties that held them, abandoning all prejudices that paralyzed, putting an end to every effort that was likely to conflict with the practical definite command and program and plan.

When the call comes, it is almost invariably to something new and surprising and startling, in the doing of which we seem to have to go back upon things that we have said and done in the past. The peril of the people of God is always that they shall be so wedded to yesterday that they are not ready for God's tomorrow; or that they shall be so busy today making their programs that when God brings His program, their own arrangements interfere with the carrying out of His will.

Doing God's Work is Solemn Business

**"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD..."
(Lev 10:1).**

This is without question a story full of solemnity. It gives pause to all who are called to service, as it reminds us of the necessity for a constant and sustained loyalty to God in our methods of service. It calls the Christian Church ever and anon to halt in her progress in order that she may readjust her relationships with her Lord. It calls us to examine every organization that is springing up, lest haply we find that they are not in accordance with the Divine method, even though they desire the realization of the Divine purpose. I am not at all sure that if the Church would give herself to such solemn consideration and readjustment, she would not find many organizations which are merely fungus growths, sapping her life, and contributing nothing to the work of God.

When we turn from the larger outlook to the more particular, with what awful solemnity does this word speak to us of our work for God. The dark appalling hint of the story needs emphasizing in all its applications; the worker for God must never touch God's work in the strength of any false stimulant. To attempt God's work under the stimulus of passion for fame, or desire for notoriety, is to burn false fire on the altar. To us, I repeat, prescribed forms are no more; but the living and ever-present Spirit of God is with us, and the greatest matter in all our Christian service is that we seek to know His will and submit ourselves to His direction.



James Russell Miller

(1840– 1912)

He was one of the most popular Christian authors of his age writing over 60 books, booklets, and pamphlets. He served as a pastor for several decades in Pennsylvania and Illinois. He also served as Editorial Superintendent of the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

- 1. A Word about Temper**
- 2. Judging Others**
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- 4. My Will or God's Will?**
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A Word about TEMPER

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

More than half of us are bad-tempered—at least an English social scientist tells us so. He claims that this is no mere general statement and no bit of guesswork; he gives us the figures for it. He arranged to have about two thousand people put unconsciously under espionage as to their ordinary temper, and then had careful reports made of the results. The calculations of the returns has been announced, and is decidedly unflattering to the two thousand tempers that were thus put to the test. More than half of these people—to be entirely accurate, 52 percent of them—are set down as bad-tempered in various degrees.

The dictionary has been well-near exhausted of adjectives of this order, in giving the different shades of bad-temper: aggressive, angry, bickering, bitter, capricious, choleric, contentious, crotchety, despotic, domineering, easily offended, gloomy, grumpy, hasty, huffy, irritable, morose, obstinate, reproachful, peevish, sulky, surly, vindictive—these are some of the qualifying words. There are employed, in all, 46 terms which describe a bad temper.

We do not like to believe that the case is quite so serious—that many of us are unamiable in some offensive degree. It is easier to confess our neighbor's faults and infirmities, than our own. So, therefore, quietly taking refuge for ourselves among the 48 percent of good-tempered people—we are willing to admit that a great many of the people we know, have at times rather ungentle tempers. They are easily provoked; they fly into a passion on very slight occasion; they are haughty, domineering, peevish, fretful or vindictive!

What is even worse, most of them appear to make no effort to grow out of their infirmities of disposition! The sour fruit does not come to mellow ripeness in the passing years; the roughness is not polished off the diamond to reveal its lustrous hidden beauty. The same petulance, pride, vanity, selfishness and other disagreeable qualities are found in the life, year after year! Where there is a struggle to overcome one's faults and grow out of them, and where the progress toward better and more beautiful spiritual character is perceptible, though ever so slow—we should have sympathy. But where one appears unconscious of one's blemishes, and manifests no desire to conquer one's faults—there is little ground for encouragement.

Man-like it is—to fall into sin.

Fiend-like it is—to dwell therein.

Saint-like it is—for sin to grieve.

God-like it is—for sin to leave.

Bad temper is such a disfigurement of character, and, besides, works such harm to one's self and to one's neighbors, that no one should spare any pains or cost to have it cured! The ideal Christian life is one of unbroken kindness. It is dominated by love—the love whose portrait is drawn for us in the immortal thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." That is the picture of the ideal Christian life!

We have but to turn to the gospel pages—to find the story of a life in which all this was realized. Jesus never lost his temper. He lived among people who tried him at every point—some by their dullness, others by their bitter enmity and persecution—but he never failed in sweetness of disposition, in patience, in self-denying love. Like the flowers which give out their perfume only

when crushed; like the odoriferous wood which bathes the axe which hews it with fragrance; the life of Christ yielded only the tenderer, sweeter love to the rough impact of men's harshness and wrong. That is the pattern on which we should strive to fashion our life and our character. Every outbreak of violent temper, every shade of ugliness in disposition, mars the radiant loveliness of the picture we are seeking to have fashioned in our souls! Whatever is not loving—is unlovely character.

There is another phase: bad-tempered people are continually hurting others, oftentimes their best and truest friends. Some people are sulky—and one person's sulkiness casts a chilling shadow over a whole household! Others are so sensitive, ever watching for slights and offended by the merest trifles—that even their nearest friends have no freedom of fellowship with them! Others are despotic, and will brook no kindly suggestion, nor listen to any expression of opinion! Others are so quarrelsome that even the meekest and gentlest person cannot live peaceably with them! Whatever may be the special characteristic of the bad temper, it makes only pain and humiliation for the person's friends!

A bad temper usually implies a sharp tongue. Sometimes, indeed, it makes one morose and glum. A brother and a sister living together are said often to have passed months without speaking to each other, though eating at the same table and sleeping under the same roof! A man recently died who for twelve years, it was said, had never spoken to his wife, though they continued to dwell together, and three times daily sat down together at the same table!

Bad temper sometimes runs to sullen silence. Such silence is not golden. Generally, however, a bad-tempered person has an unbridled tongue and speaks out his hateful feelings; and there is no limit to the pain and the harm which angry and ugly words can produce in gentle hearts!

It would be easy to extend this portrayal of the evils of bad temper

—but it will be more profitable to inquire HOW a bad-tempered person may become good-tempered. There is no doubt that this happy change is possible in any case. There is no temper so obdurately bad—that it cannot be trained into sweetness. The grace of God can take the most unlovely life—and transform it into the image of Christ.

As in all moral changes, however, grace does not work independently of human volition and exertion. "I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me!" Colossians 1:29. God always works helpfully—with those who strive to reach Christlikeness. We must resist the devil—or he will not flee from us. We must struggle to obtain the victory over our own evil habits and dispositions, although it is only through Christ that we can be conquerors. He will not make us conquerors, unless we enter the battle. We have a share, and a large and necessary share, in the culture of our own character.

The bad-tempered man will never become good-tempered until he deliberately sets for himself the task, and enters resolutely and persistently upon its accomplishment. The transformation will never come of itself, even in a Christian! People do not grow out of ugly temper into sweet refinement—as a peach ripens from sourness into lusciousness.

Then the thing to be accomplished, is not the destroying of the temper; temper is a good quality in its place. The task is not destruction—but control. A man is very weak—who has a strong temper without the power of self-control. Likewise is he weak—who has a weak temper. The truly strong man—is he who is strong in the element of temper—that is, has strong passions and feelings capable of great anger—and also has perfect self-control. When Moses failed and broke down in temper—in self-control, he was not the man to lead the people into the Promised Land; therefore God at once prepared to relieve him. The task to be set, therefore, in self-discipline is the gaining of complete mastery over every feeling and emotion, so as to be able to restrain every

impulse to speak or to act unadvisedly.

We represent Christ in this world. People cannot see Him; they must look at us—to see a little of what He is like. Whatever great work we may do for Christ—if we fail to live out His life of love, kindness and patience—we fail in an essential part of our duty as Christians.

Nor can we be greatly useful in our personal life, while our daily conduct is stained by frequent outbursts of anger, and other exhibitions of bad temper. In the old fable, the spider goes about doing mischief wherever it creeps, while the bee by its wax and its honey, makes "sweetness and light" wherever it flies. We should be bees—rather than be spiders; living to turn darkness into light—and to put a little more sweetness into the life of all who know us. But only as our own lives shine in the brightness of holy love, and our hearts and lips distill the sweetness of patience and gentleness, can we fulfill our mission in this world—as Christ's true messengers to men.

Then there is need of a higher standard of character in this regard, than many people seem to set for themselves. We never rise higher than our ideals. The perfect beauty of Christ should ever be envisioned in our hearts—as that which we would attain for ourselves. The honor of our Master's name—should impel us to strive ever toward Christlikeness in spirit and in disposition.

In striving to overcome our impatience with others, it will help us to remember that we and they have the common heritage of a sinful nature. The thing in them which irritates us—is, no doubt, balanced by something in us which looks just as unlovely in their eyes and just as sorely tries their forbearance toward us!

Very likely, if we think our neighbors are hard to live peaceably with—they think about the same of us! And who shall tell in whom lies the greater degree of fault? Certain it is, that a really good-tempered person can rarely ever be drawn into a quarrel with

anyone. He is resolutely determined that he will not be a partner in any unChristian strife. He would rather suffer wrongfully, than offer any retaliation. He has learned to bear—and to forbear. Then, by his gentle tact—he is able to conciliate any who are angry.

A fable relates that in the depth of a forest, there lived two foxes. One of them said to the other one day, in the politest of fox-language, "Let's quarrel!"

"Very well," said the other; "but how shall we go about it?"

They tried all sorts of ways—but in vain, for both would give way. At last, one fox brought two stones.

"There!" said he. "Now you say they are yours—and I'll say they are mine—and we will quarrel and fight and scratch! Now I'll begin.

"Those stones are mine!"

"All right!" answered the other fox, "you are welcome to them."

"But we shall never quarrel at this rate," replied the first.

"No, indeed, you old simpleton! Don't you know, that it takes two to make a quarrel?"

So the foxes gave up trying to quarrel, and never played at this silly game again.

The fable has its lesson for other creatures, besides foxes. "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you," Paul tells us, "we should live peaceably with all men."

A wise man says, "Every man takes care that his neighbors shall not cheat him—but a day comes when he begins to care—that he does not cheat his neighbors. Then all goes well." So long as a

man sees only the quarrelsome temper of his neighbor—he is not far toward holiness. But when he has learned to watch and to try to control his own temper, and to weep over his own infirmities—he is on the way to Christ-likeness, and will soon be conqueror over his own weakness!

Life is too short to spend even one day of it in bickering and strife! Love is too sacred to be forever lacerated and torn by the ugly briars of sharp temper! Surely we ought to learn to be loving and patient with others—since God has to show every day such infinite patience toward us! Is not the very essence of true love—the spirit that is not easily provoked, that bears all things? Can we not, then, train our life to sweeter gentleness? Can we not learn to be touched even a little roughly, without resenting it? Can we not bear little injuries, and apparent injustices, without flying into a rage? Can we not have in us something of the mind of Christ, which will enable us, like him, to endure all wrong and injury and give back no word or look of bitterness? The way over which we and our friend walk together, is too short to be spent in wrangling.

Judging Others

"One of our Lord's counsels to his followers is, "Judge not, that you be not judged."

We cannot judge others fairly. For example, we do not know what may be the causes of the faults we would condemn in others.

Some people's infirmities are hereditary. Or there may be something in their circumstances or experiences, which is the cause of the peculiarities we are disposed to censure. We do not know what hidden troubles people have — what secret sorrows.

Longfellow somewhere says, "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each man's life, sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility!" If we knew all that God knows of people's lives, our censure would turn to pity!

We are in danger of misjudging the acts and character of others, also, because we can see only a fragment of their life. There are two sides to most things and people, and we usually see but one.

One Christmas the poet Whittier received from a friend a flower pressed between two panes of glass. One side showed only a blurred mass of leaves and stems, without beauty. The other side revealed all the loveliness of the flower as it lay beneath the glass. Mr. Whittier hung his gift in his window, and turned the beautiful side inward. Those who passed outside saw only "a grey disk of clouded glass," and wondered that the poet hung such an unsightly thing in his window. But he, sitting within, saw all the exquisite loveliness of the flower. Other things besides pressed flowers have two sides, and Whittier writes:

"Deeper musings come to me, My half-immortal flower, from thee;

Man judges from a partial view; None ever yet his brother knew.

The eternal Eye that sees the whole

May better read the darkened soul,

And find to outward sense denied,

The flower upon its inmost side."

Too often we see only the blurred side of people — and most people have a blurred side. Behind their rough exterior, however, may be a true heart, gentle and kindly.

We know a man out in the world among men, and he seems harsh, stern, ungentle. But some day we see him at home where his sick child suffers, and there he is another man — thoughtful, patient, almost motherly. It would have been most unjust if we had made up our judgment of him from the outside view only.

A young man was severely criticized by his companions for his miserliness. He was receiving a good salary but lived in a pinched way, without even the plain comforts which he could easily have afforded — his fellow-clerks thought. He never spent a penny for luxuries and avoided the expenses which other young men thought necessary. That was one side of the young man's life, and there were those who judged him by it.

But there was another side. He had an only sister — they were orphans — who was a great sufferer. She was confined to her room and bed, a helpless invalid. This brother provided for her. That was the reason he lived so cheaply, saving and doing without things for himself. He made these personal sacrifices, that his sister in her loneliness and pain, might have comforts. That was the other side of the character, the one side of which had seemed so unattractive to the young man's friends.

There are countless cases of this kind. We see a person's actions and form an unfavorable opinion — not knowing the true motive or reason for the actions.

The Pharisees judged Jesus and condemned him bitterly for eating with publicans and sinners, and showing himself the friend of these outcast classes. They saw him only in the light of their own prejudice, and they inferred that he was not a godly man, or he would not have chosen such companions. But we know that he went among these despised and fallen ones, that he might save them. The judgment of his enemies was wrong, because it was passed upon only a fragment of the truth.

Our own imperfections also unfit us for judging fairly. One who has no art taste cannot be a fair critic of works of art. We with our marred and imperfect moral nature, cannot judge righteously of the work and character of another.

The very faults we condemn in our neighbors — oft-times exist in ourselves in even graver form! Jesus teaches this when he says, "Why do you behold the mote that is in your brother's eye — but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye?" While we are finding little specks of fault in others and judging and condemning them on account of these motes — we ourselves have greater faults! We are not fit to be judges of others, because we have the same faults which we see in them.

Besides, while we are looking after the faults of others — we are in danger of neglecting the care of our own life!

"You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way." Romans 14:10-13



The Necessity of Daily Bible Reading

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly!" Colossians 3:16

Probably prayer is less neglected in devotions, than is the reading of the Bible. Many people who would not go out any morning without a few moments of prayer, will go forth day after day into the thick of life's duties and perils, without reading even a verse of Scripture! They feel the necessity of asking God to keep, guide and bless them — but they fail to realize that it is in and through meditating on His Word, that God chiefly gives His richest and best blessings.

It is in His Word, that God reveals Himself. We cannot know what He is like, nor what the attributes of His character are — unless we ponder the Scriptures. We cannot learn what God's will is, nor what He would have us to do and to be — if we do not look into His Word. There is nothing that we need more, than to hear God speaking to us every morning. This is possible, only as we open the Bible and let its words whisper their messages to us.

No matter how familiar we may be with the teachings of the Scriptures, we need to ponder them anew every morning to keep their pure ideals and lofty requirements ever before us, lest we allow our standard of holy living to be lowered.

A celebrated painter always kept some purely-colored stones on his table. When asked by a visitor why he did so, he said it was to keep his eye up to tone. When he was working in pigments, unconsciously his sense of color was weakened. By keeping a pure color near him he brought his eye up to tone again, just as the musician by his tuning-fork brings himself up to the right pitch. In the same way, we continually need to turn to God's Word to keep our thoughts, and character, and life up to the true standard.

Rubenstein used to say that he could never omit his daily practice on the piano, for if he did, the quality of his playing would at once begin to deteriorate. He said that if he missed practice for three days — the public would know it; if he missed practice for two days — his friends would know it; and if he did not practice for even one day — he himself knew it!

It is no less true in Christian life, that in order to keep its holy tone up to what it should be, there must never be a break in the continuity of the study of God's Word. If we leave off for only one day, we shall become conscious of a loss of power in living. If for two successive days we fail to look into God's perfect law, our friends around us will notice the failure in the beauty, the sweetness and the grace of our character and disposition. If for three days we fail to study the Scriptures, to see how God would have us live, even the people of the world will see a lowering of the spiritual quality of our life!

One of the ways the Bible helps us, is by making Christ known to us. The noblest Christian is he before whose eyes, the character of Jesus shines in brightest splendor. Indeed, it is only when we have clear visions of Christ, that we really grow like Him.

"It seems to me," says a writer, "that nowadays men think and talk too much about improving their own character — but meditate too little on the perfectness of the divine character." Christ will never appear really great in our eyes, unless we make His Word our daily study. And only as He becomes great and glorious in our thought — will our character and standard of life be lifted up to what they should be.

Many of the blessings we seek in prayer, can come to us only through the Word of God:

We ask to be kept near the heart of Christ — but our Master tells us that only those who keep His commandments shall abide in

His love. In order to keep His commandments, we must know them — and we can know them only by reading and re-reading them.

We ask God in the morning to guide us through the day, and in one of the psalms is the prayer, "Order my steps according to Your Word." That is, God leads us by His Word. If then we do not read the words of God, how can we get His guidance?

The leading He promises is not general, by long stretches — but by little steps. The Psalmist says, "Your Word is a lamp unto my feet." It is not said that prayer is the lamp — but the Word. We must carry it in our hand, too, as one carries a lantern to throw its beams about his feet.

We pray to be kept from sin, and in the Scriptures one says, "Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Our prayers to be kept from sin, can be answered only by getting the Word of God into our heart!

These are suggestions of the necessity of reading the Bible daily, as well as of praying. Neither is complete in itself alone. We must talk to God — but we must also listen to God talk to us through His Word. We must pray for blessings — but only through the divine words of Scripture, can these blessings come to us.

My Will or God's Will?

"May Your will be done." Matthew 6:11

"Not as I will—but as You will." Matthew 26:39

What is success? What is the true aim in life? What should one, setting out to make his way through this world, take as the goal of all his living and striving? 'Views of life' differ widely. Many think they are in this world to make a career for themselves. They set out with some splendid vision of success in their mind—and they devote their life to the realizing of this vision. If they fail in this, they suppose they have failed in life. If they achieve their dream, they consider themselves, and are considered by others, as successful.

The world has no other standard of success. It may be the amassing of wealth; it may be the winning of power among men; it may be triumph of a certain skill; or genius in art, in literature, in music, etc. But whatever the definite object may be, it is purely an earthly ambition. The two elements in the life, according to this view, are, that the career is one which the world honors, and that a man wins distinction in it.

Applying this standard to life—only a few men are really successful. Great men are as rare as lofty mountain peaks. Only a few win the high places; the mass remain in the low valleys. The percentage of those who succeed in business is small. In the professions, too, in literature, in art, in civil life, in all the callings, it is the same—only a few win honor, rise into fame, achieve distinction; while the great multitude remain in obscurity or go down in the dust of earthly defeat.

Is this the only standard of success in life? Do all men, except for the few who win earth's prizes, really fail? Is there no other kind of

success? The world's answer gives no comfort to those who find themselves among 'the unhonored'. But there is another sphere—there is a life in which success is not material—but spiritual. One may utterly fail, so far as earthly results are concerned; and yet, in the invisible spiritual realm, be a splendid winner in the race!

The true test of life—is character. Everything else is extraneous, belonging only to the husk, which shall fall off in the day of ripening! Character is the kernel, the wheat, that which is true and enduring. Nothing else is worth while—except that which we can carry with us through death, and into eternity! Paul puts it in a sentence when he says, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18

It is altogether possible that a man may fail of winning any earthly greatness, any distinction among men, anything that will immortalize him in this world's calendars—and yet be richly and nobly successful in spiritual things, in character, in a ministry of usefulness, in things which shall abide—when mountains have crumbled into dust! It is possible for one to fall behind in the race for wealth and honor—and yet all the while to be building up in himself—an eternal fabric of beauty and strength!

Here is a man who at mid-life, is a physical wreck. He has dropped out of the ranks, and fallen far behind those who at the first were his comrades. He is a hopeless invalid. The other day the physician said that he will never get any better. He may live for many years—yet there is nothing before him but pathetic invalidism.

Shall we say that this man's life is a failure because of his physical condition, which has put a stop to all effort and compels him to sit with folded hands in the shadows, watching busy men at their tasks as they continue to win honor and success? No, his life need not be a failure! He has lived nobly all his years. There is not a stain upon his name. He has been building up in himself a

character in which the beatitudes shine: loveliness, meekness, hunger for righteousness, mercifulness, purity of heart, the peace-making spirit. He has won no name in the world's ranks—but he has followed Christ faithfully, and has pleased him. He has lived a life of love, too—love which has expressed itself not merely in word—but in countless ministries of grace to those who have turned to him for sympathy and help. He has had God and heaven in all his life, and has lived near the heart of Christ!

No doubt there is a mystery about the strange ways of Providence with him—but we may be sure that this godly man's life is in God's sight, no less successful, when all activity has ceased—than it was in the days when he was busiest, full of energy and toil. Who will say, indeed, that these are not his best days? While the outer man has been perishing, decaying—may not the inner man have been growing in all worthy qualities, in all spiritual graces, in the things which shall endure forever? Ofttimes it is in what the world regards as failure—that a man really achieves his noblest and best success. Many a man has found his soul—only when he had lost his fortune or his health or his place.

We are not accustomed to thank God for our disappointments, for the blighting of our earthly hopes and expectations, for the failure of our plans—but we might safely do so, ofttimes; for it is in such experiences as these—that we are led to the sources of truest blessedness, and most enduring honor.

What is the standard of success in the sphere of the unseen and the eternal? It is the doing of the will of God. He who does the will of God—makes his life radiant and beautiful, though in the world's scale he is rated as having altogether failed in the battle. He who is true, just, humble, pure, pleasing God and living unselfishly—is the only man who really succeeds—while all others fail.

Really, there is no other final and infallible standard of living. One who writes his name highest in earth's lists, and yet has not done God's will, meanwhile, has failed, as God Himself looks at his

career. God has a purpose in our creation—and we succeed only when our life carries out this purpose. The most radiant career, as it appears to men, means nothing—if it is not that for which God made us. We fail in life—if we do not realize God's will for us.

We live worthily—only when we do what God sent us here to do. A splendid career in the sight of men—has no splendor in God's sight—if it is but the striving of human ambition; if it is not God's ideal for the life.

Not the making of a fine worldly career, therefore—but the simple doing of God's will—is the one true aim in living. Thus only can we achieve real success. If we do this, though we fail in the earthly race—we shall not fail in God's sight. We may make no name among men, may raise for ourselves no monument of earthly glory—but if we please God by a life of obedience and humble service, and build up within us a character in which divine virtues shine—we shall have attained abiding success.

The only way, therefore, to make our life nobly and truly successful, is to devote ourselves to the doing of God's will. It is not the things we want to do, that are the best—but the things God would have us do. Ofttimes these may be things which to our thought it is scarcely worth while to do, and the turning aside from our fine schemes and conspicuous efforts—to attend to these trivialities may appear to be a wasting of talent and time. But always, God's will is the grandest thing we can find to do in all the world, though it is in men's eyes—the lowliest task our hands can do.

An autobiographical passage in the life of Norman McLeod illustrates this. "My life," he says, "is not what I would have chosen. I often long for quiet, for reading, and for thought. It seems to me to be a very paradise to be able to read, to think, go deep into things, to gather the glorious riches of intellectual culture. But God in his providence, has forbidden this to me. I must spend hours in receiving people who wish to speak to me

about all manner of trifles; I must reply to letters about nothing; I must engage in public work on everything; I must employ my life on what seems uncongenial, vanishing, temporary, wasteful. Yet God knows me better than I know myself. He knows my gifts, my abilities, my failings, and my weakness; what I can do—and what I cannot do. So I desire to be led, and not to lead; to follow him. I am quite sure he has thus enabled me to do a great deal more in ways which seemed to me almost a waste of life, in advancing his kingdom; than I would have done any other way."

The most successful life—is the one which submits the most cheerfully and the most completely, to the will of God. It will not be an indolent life, nor will it be aimless and purposeless. It is the will of God—that every ability of our being shall be brought out, trained, and disciplined to its highest possibility, and devoted to the noblest and worthiest service. But the dominant influence in our life, should always be the will of God—and not any ambition of our own. Then shall we fulfill the purpose for which God made us, when he sent us into the world. And this will be the noblest career possible for us!

Copying but a Fragment

Nothing is more striking to a close observer of human life, than the almost infinite variety of character which exists among those who profess to be Christians. No two are alike. Even those who are alike revered for their saintliness, who alike seem to wear the image of their Lord, whose lives are alike attractive in their beauty—show the widest diversity in individual traits, and in the cast and mold of their character. Yet all are sitting before the same model; all are striving after the same ideal; all are imitators of the same blessed life.

There is but one standard of true Christian character—likeness to Christ. It is into His image—that we are to be transformed; and it is toward His holy beauty—that we are always to strive. We are to live as He lived. We are to copy His features into our lives. Wherever, in all the world, true disciples of Christ are found—they are all trying to reproduce the likeness of their Master in themselves. "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6

Why is it, then, that there is such variety of character and disposition among those who aim to follow the same example? Why are not all just alike? If a thousand artists were to paint the picture of the same person—their pictures, if faithful, would show the same features. But a thousand persons seek to copy into their own lives the likeness of Christ, and the result is a thousand different representations of that likeness, no two the same. Why is there this strange diversity in Christian lives, when all have before them the same original type?

One reason for this, is that God does not bestow upon all his children the same gifts, or the same natural qualities. The Creator loves variety, as all his works attest. No two animals are precisely alike in every feature; no two plants are exactly similar in their

structure; no two human lives in all the race are identical in all respects; and divine grace does not recast all dispositions in the same mold.

When gold is minted, each coin of a kind is stamped by the same die; and a million coins of the same value will all be precisely alike. But life is not minted as gold is. Grace does not transform Peter into a John, nor Paul into a Barnabas, nor Luther into a Calvin. Regeneration does not make busy, bustling Martha quiet and reposeful, like her sister Mary. Nor does grace change Mary's calm, restful spirit into the anxious and distracted activity of Martha. It makes them both friends of Jesus, devoted to him in love and loyalty and service; but it leaves each of them herself in all her individual characteristics. It makes them both like Christ in holiness, in consecration, in heavenly longings; but it does not touch those features which give to each one her personal identity.

You drop twenty different seeds in the same garden-bed, and they spring up into twenty different kinds of plants, from the delicate mignonette to the flaunting sunflower. No skill of gardening can make all the plants alike. The fuchsia will always be a fuchsia, the rose will always be a rose, the geranium will always be a geranium. In the same soil, with the same sunshine and rain, and the same culture, each grows up after its kind. In like manner, divine grace does not make all Christian women either Marys or Marthas, or Dorcasas or Priscillas, nor all Christian men either Johns or Peters, or Barnabases or Aquilas; but each believer grows up into his own peculiar self. Regeneration neither adds to nor takes from our natural gifts; and since there is infinite variety in the endowments and qualities originally bestowed upon different individuals, there is the same variety in the company of Christ's followers.

Another reason for this diversity among Christians—is because even the best and holiest saints realize but a little of the image of Christ, and have only one little fraction and fragment of his likeness in their souls. In one of his followers, there is some one

feature of Christ's blessed life which appears; in another, there is another feature; in a third, still a different feature. One seeks to copy Christ's gentleness, another his patience, another his sympathy, another his meekness. A thousand believers may all, in a certain sense, be like Christ—and yet no two of them have, or consciously strive after, just the same features of Christ in their souls. The reason is, that the character of Christ is so great, so majestic, so glorious—that it is impossible to copy all of it into any one little human life; and again, each human character is so imperfect and limited, that it cannot reach out in all directions after the boundless and infinite character of Christ.

It is as if a great company of artists were sent to paint each one a picture of the Alps. Each chooses his own point of observation, and selects the particular feature of the Alps he desires to paint. They all bring back their pictures; but alas! no two of them are alike. One canvas presents a sweet valley-scene, with its quiet stream and bright flowers; another has for its central figure, a wild crag among the clouds; another a snow-crowned peak, glittering in the sunshine; another a rushing torrent leaping over the rocks; another a mighty glacier. Yet none of the artists can say that the pictures of the others are not true. They are probably as true as his own—but there is not one of them, who has painted the whole Alps. Each one has put upon his canvas only the little part of the magnificent scene which he saw.

So it is with those who are striving to reproduce the likeness of Christ in their own lives. A thousand Christians, earnest and sincere, begin to follow him and to imitate him. One seizes upon one feature which to him seems to be the central beauty of Christ's character. Another Christian, looking upon the same glorious person with different eyes, or from the view-point of different experiences, sees another feature altogether, and calls it Christ. Each one strives to copy the particular elements of Christly character which he sees. No two reproductions are precisely the same; no two have the same conception of Christ-likeness. Yet no one can say that the others are not true

Christians, that they have not also seen the Lord, and have not faithfully copied into their own lives what they saw of him.

The truth is, the Alps as a whole are too varied, too vast—for any one artist to take into his perspective, and fully paint upon his canvas. The best he can do is to portray some one or two features—the features his eye can see from where he stands. And just in the same way, Christ is too great in his infinite perfections, in the majestic sweep of his character, in the many-sidedness of his beauty, for any one of his finite followers to copy the whole of his image into his own little life! The most that any of us can do—is to get into our own soul, a few little fragments of the wonderful likeness of our Lord.

Thus it is, that there is such variety in the individual dispositions of Christians, while all seek to follow the same copy, and while all may be equally faithful in their noble endeavors. The practical lesson from this fact is, that no one follower of Christ should condemn another, because the other's spiritual life is not of the same stamp as his own. Let not Martha, busied with her much serving, running everywhere to missionary meetings, or to visit the sick and the poor—find fault with Mary in her quiet devotion, peaceful, thoughtful, gentle, loving—because she does not abound in the same activities. Nor let Mary in her turn judge Martha, and call her piety superficial. Let her honor it rather as the copy of another and different feature of the infinite loveliness of Christ.

There is the greatest diversity in the modes of service rendered by different followers of Christ. All may be alike loyal and acceptable, and yet no two be precisely the same. Each follows Christ along his own path, and does his work in his own way. Whatever we may say about the sweetness and beauty of Mary, as we see her sitting in such peaceful attitude at the feet of her Lord—we must not forget that it was not Martha's service which Jesus reproved—but her anxious, fretful worry. Her service was important, was even essential to our Lord's own comfort—and to

her true and hospitable entertainment of him in her home. The Marys are very lovely; and every woman should have the Mary-spirit of peace, and should sit much, Mary-like, at the Master's feet to hear his words, in order to be fitted for the best service. But Martha's work must be done too—no true Christian woman will neglect her duties of service in her privileges of devotion.

Let each of these good women follow the Master closely, see as much as possible of the infinite loveliness of his character, and copy into her own life all she can see; yet let her not imagine that she has seen or copied all of Christ—but let her look at every other Christian woman's life with reverence, as bearing another little fragment of the same divine likeness.

Let every Christian do earnestly and well, the particular work which he is fitted and called to do—but let him not imagine that he is doing the only kind of work which God wants to have done in this world; rather let him look upon every faithful servant who does a different work as doing a part equally important and equally acceptable to the Master.

The bird praises God by singing; the flower pays its tribute in fragrant incense as its censer swings in the breeze; the tree shakes down fruits from its bending boughs; the stars pour out their silver beams to gladden the earth; the clouds give their blessing in gentle rain. Yet all with equal faithfulness fulfill their mission.

Just so among Christ's redeemed servants: one serves by incessant toil in the home, caring for a large family; another by silent example as a sufferer, patient and uncomplaining; another with the pen, sending forth words that inspire, help, cheer, and bless; another by the living voice, whose eloquence moves men, and starts impulses to better, grander holy living; another by the ministry of sweet song; another by sitting in quiet peace at Jesus' feet, drinking in his spirit, and then shining as a gentle and silent light, or pouring out the fragrance of love like a lowly and

unconscious flower. Yet each and all of these may be serving Christ acceptably, hearing at the close of each day the whispered word, "Well done! My good and faithful servant!"

The Home Conversation

Few things are more important in a home, than its conversation—yet there are few things to which less deliberate thought is given. We take great pains to have our house well-furnished. We select our carpets and pictures with the utmost care. We send our children to school that they may become intelligent. We strive to bring into our homes, the best conditions of happiness. But how often is the speech of the household left untrained and undisciplined?

The good we might do in our homes with our tongues, if we would use them to the limit of their capacity of cheer and helpfulness, it is simply impossible to state. That in most homes the best possible results from the gift of speech are not attained, is very evident. Why should so much power for blessing be wasted? Especially why should we ever pervert these gifts, and use our tongues to do evil, to give pain, to scatter seeds of bitterness? It is a sad thing when a child is born dumb; but it were better far to be born dumb, and never to have the gift of speech—than, having that gift, to employ it in speaking only sharp, unloving, or angry words.

While in all places and at all times our words should be well chosen, and should be full of the pure and gentle spirit of Christ—there are many reasons why the home conversation, pre-eminently, should be loving. Home is the place for warmth and tenderness: it should be made the brightest and sweetest spot on earth, to those who dwell within its walls. We should all carry there our very best moods, tempers, and dispositions. Especially by our speech should we seek to contribute to the enrichment of the home life, helping to make it elevating and refining, and in every way ennobling in its influence.

Home should inspire every tongue to speak its most loving words

—yet there is in many families, a great dearth of kind speech. In some cases, there is no conversation at all worthy of the name; there are no affectionate greetings in the morning, or hearty good-nights at parting when the evening closes; the meals are eaten in silence; there are no bright fireside chats over the events and incidents of the day. A stranger might mistake the home for a deaf-and-dumb institution, or for a hotel where strangers were together only for a passing night. In other cases—it would be even better if silence did reign—for there are words of miserable strife and shameful quarreling heard from day to day!

Husband and wife, who vowed at the marriage-altar to cherish each other until death, keep up an incessant petty strife of words!

Parents, who are commanded in the Holy Word not to provoke their children to wrath, lest they be discouraged, but to bring them up in the nurture of the Lord, scarcely ever speak to them gently and in tenderness. They seem to imagine that they are not governing their children, unless they are perpetually scolding them. They fly into a rage against them at the smallest irritation. They issue their commands to them in words and tones which would better suit the despot of a petty savage tribe, than the head of a Christian household. It is not strange, that, under such "nurture," the children, instead of dwelling together in unity, with loving speech—only wrangle and quarrel, speaking only bitter words in their interactions with one another.

That there are many homes of just this type, it is idle to deny. That prayer is offered morning and evening in some of these families, only makes the truth the sadder; for it is mockery for the members of a household to rise together from their knees after morning devotion, only to begin another day of strife and bitterness!

Nothing in the home life needs to be more carefully watched and more diligently cultivated, than the conversation; it should be

imbued with the spirit of love. No bitter word should ever be spoken!

The talk of husband and wife, in their companionship together, should always be tender. Anger in word, or even in tone—should never be allowed! Chiding and fault-finding should never be permitted to mar the sacredness of their speech! The warmth and tenderness of their hearts, should flow out in every word that they utter to each other. As parents, too, in their interaction with their children, they should never speak—but in words of Christ-like gentleness. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that children's lives can grow up into beauty— an atmosphere of strife! Harsh, angry words are to their sensitive souls—what frosts are to the delicate flowers! To bring them up in the nurture of the Lord, is to bring them up as Christ himself would do; and surely that would be with infinite tenderness. It is impossible to estimate the blessed influence of loving speech, day after day and month after month—it is like the falling of warm spring rain and sunshine on the garden. Beauty and sweetness of character will issue from such a home.

But home conversation needs more than love, to give it its best influence: it ought to be enriched by thought. The Savior's warning against idle words should be remembered. Every wise-hearted parent will seek to train his household to converse on subjects which will yield instruction, or tend toward spiritual and moral refinement. The table affords an excellent opportunity for this kind of education. Three times each day the family gathers there; it is a place for cheerfulness. Simply on the grounds of health, meals should never be eaten in silence. Bright, cheerful conversation is an excellent sauce, and a prime aid to digestion. If it prolongs the meal, and thus appears to take too much time out of the busy day—it will, in the end, add to the years by increased healthfulness and lengthened life. In any case, however, something is due to spiritual and moral refinement, and still more is due to the culture of one's home life.

The table should be made the center of the social life of the household. There, all should appear at their best and brightest; gloom should be banished. The conversation should be sprightly and sparkling; it should consist of something besides dull and threadbare commonplaces. The idle gossip of the street is not a worthy theme for such hallowed moments. The conversation of the table should be of a kind to interest all the members of the family; hence it should vary to suit the age and intelligence of those who form the family circle. The events and occurrences of each day, may with profit be spoken of and discussed; and now that the daily newspaper contains so full and faithful a summary of the world's doings and happenings, this is easy. Each one may mention the event which has specially impressed him in reading or in discussion without. Bits of refined humor should always be welcome, and all wearisome recital and dull, uninteresting discussion, should be avoided.

Table-talk may be enriched, and at the same time the education of all the members of the family may be advanced, by bringing out at least one new fact at each meal, to be added to the common fund of knowledge. Suppose there are two or three children at the table, varying in their ages from five to twelve. Let the father or the mother have some particular subject to introduce during the meal, which will be both interesting and profitable to the younger members of the family. It may be some historical incident, or some scientific fact, or an event in the life of some distinguished man. The subject should not be above the capacity of the younger people, for whose special benefit it is introduced, nor should the conversation be over-weighted by attempting too much at one time.

One single fact clearly presented, and firmly impressed so as to be remembered, is better than whole chapters of information poured out in a confused jargon on minds, that tomorrow cannot recall any part of it. A little thought will show the rich benefits of a system like this, if faithfully followed through a series of years. If but one fact is presented at every meal, there will be a thousand

things taught to the children in a year! If the subjects are wisely chosen, the fund of knowledge communicated in this way will be of no inconsiderable value. A whole system of education lies in this suggestion; for, besides the communication of important knowledge, the habit of mental activity is stimulated, interest is awakened in lines of study and research which may afterwards be followed out, tastes are improved, while the effect upon the family life is elevating and refining!

It may be objected that such a system of table-talk could not be conducted without much thought, study, and preparation on the part of parents. But if the habit once were formed, and the plan properly introduced, it would be found comparatively easy for parents of ordinary intelligence to maintain it. Books are now prepared in great numbers, giving important facts in small compass. Then, there are encyclopedias and dictionaries of various kinds. The newspapers contain every week paragraphs and articles of great value in such a course. A wise use of scissors and paste will keep scrap-books well filled with materials which can readily be made available. It will be necessary to think and plan for such a system, to choose the topics in advance, and to become familiar with the facts. This work might be shared by both parents, and thus be easy for both. That it will cost time and thought and labor ought not to be an objection, for is it not worth almost any cost to secure the benefits and advantages which would result from such a system of home instruction?

These are only hints of the almost infinite possibilities of good which lie in the home conversation. That so little is realized in most cases, when so much is possible—is one of the saddest things about our current life. It may be that these suggestions shall stimulate in some families, at least—an earnest search after something better than they have yet found in their desultory and aimless conversational habits. Surely there should be no home in which, amid all the light talk that flies from busy tongues, time is not found every day in which to say at least one word that shall be instructive, suggestive, elevating, or at least, in some way,

helpful.

The Problem of Christian Old Age

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day!" 2 Corinthians 4:16.

Paul has a cheering thought about the undecaying inner life. The outward man, he says, always decays—but the inner man is renewed day by day. This teaching is full of comfort for those who are advancing in years. The problem of Christian old age—is to keep the heart young and full of all youth's joy, however feeble and broken the body may become. We need to be most watchful lest we allow our life to lose its zest and deteriorate in its quality, when old age begins to creep in. Hopes of achievement appear to be ended for us—our work is almost done, we think. Sometimes people, as they grow old, become less sweet, less beautiful in spirit. Troubles, disasters, and misfortunes have made the days hard and painful for them. Perhaps health is broken, and suffering is added to the other elements which make old age unhappy.

Renan, in one of his books, recalls an old legend of buried city on the coast of Brittany. With its homes, public buildings, churches and thronged streets—it sank instantly into the sea. The legend says that the city's life goes on as before, down beneath the waves. The fishermen, when in calm weather they row over the place, think they sometimes can see the gleaming tips of the church spires deep in the water, and fancy they can hear the chiming of the bells in the old belfries and even the murmur of the city's noises.

There are men who in their old age seem to have an experience like this. Their life of youthful hopes, dreams, successes, loves and joys, has been sunk out of sight, submerged in misfortunes and adversities, and has vanished altogether. Nothing remains of it all but a memory. In their discouragement they often think sadly

of their past, and seem to hear the echoes of the old songs of hope and joy, and to catch visions of the old beauty and splendor. But that is all. Nothing real is left. Their spirits have grown hopeless and bitter. Guthrie, as he grew feeble, spoke of his bald head, his trembling steps, his dullness of hearing, his dimness of eye.

But this is not worthy living, for those who are immortal, who were born to be children of God. The hard things are not meant to mar our life—they are meant to make us only the braver, the worthier, and the nobler. It is not meant that the infirmities of old age shall break through into our inner life; that should grow all the more beautiful—the more the outer life is broken. The shattering of the old mortal tent, should reveal more and more of the glory of the divine life which dwells within.

Do you ever think, you who are growing old, that old age ought really to be the very best of life? We are too apt to settle down to the feeling, that with our infirmities, we cannot any longer live beautifully, worthily, usefully, or actively. But this is not the true way to think of old age. We should reach our best then in every way.

Old age should be the best—the very best, of all life! It should be the most beautiful, with the flaws mended, the faults cured, the mistakes corrected, the lessons learned. Youth is full of immaturity. Midlife is full of toil and care, strife and ambition. Old age should be as the autumn with its golden fruit. We ought to be better Christians than ever we have been before; more submissive to God's will; more content, more patient and gentle, kindlier and more loving—when we grow old. We are drawing nearer to heaven every day—and our visions of the Father's house should be clearer and brighter. Old age is the time of harvest; it should not be marked by emptiness and decay—but by richer fruitfulness and more gracious beauty. It may be lonely, with so many gone of those who used to cluster about the life—but the loneliness will not be for long, for it is drawing nearer

continually to all the great company of godly friends, waiting in heaven.

Old age may be feeble—but the marks of feebleness are really foretokens of glory. Old people have no reason for sadness—they are really in their best days! Let them be sure to live now at their best. Paul was growing old when he wrote of his enthusiastic vision of beauty yet to be attained—but we hear no note of depression or weariness in him. He did not think of his life as done. He showed no consciousness that he had passed the highest reach of living. He was still forgetting the past and reaching forth, because he knew that the best was yet before him. His outward man was feeble, his health shattered, his physical vigor decaying—but the inner man was undecayed and undecaying. He was never before so Christ-like as he was now, never so full of hope, never so enthusiastic in his service of his Master.

Those who are growing old should show the ripest spiritual fruitfulness. They should do their best work for Christ in the days which remain. They should live their sweetest, gentlest, kindest, most helpful life in the short time which they have yet to remain in this world. They should make their years of old age—years of quietness and peace, and joy—a holy eventide. But this can be the story of their experiences only if their life be hid with Christ in God. Apart from Christ, no life can keep its zest or its radiance!

J.C. Ryle

(1816 – 1900)

John Charles Ryle was born at Macclesfield and was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford. He was awakened spiritually in 1838 while hearing Ephesians 2 read in church. He was ordained by Bishop Sumner at Winchester in 1842. He was a strong supporter of the evangelical school and a critic of Ritualism. Ryle was also known as "The man of granite, with the heart of a child."

- 1. A Praying Saviour**
- 2. Are You Asleep?**
- 3. Be Careful for Nothing**
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- 5. Gospel Treasures**
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A Praying Saviour

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and departed to a solitary place; and there he prayed. Simon and those who were with him searched for him. When they found him, they said, to him, 'Everyone is looking for you.' But he said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.' And he was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons." (Mark 1:35-39)

Every fact in our Lord's life on earth, and every word which fell from his lips, ought to be deeply interesting to a true Christian. We see a fact and a saying in the passage we have just read which deserve close attention.

We see, for one thing, an example of our Lord Jesus Christ's habits about private prayer. We are told, that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." We shall find the same thing often recorded of our Lord in the Gospel history. When he was baptized, we are told that he was "praying." When he was transfigured, we are told that "as he prayed, the fashion of his face was altered." Before he chose the twelve apostles, we are told that "He continued all night in prayer to God." When all men spoke well of him and would fain have made him a King, we are told that "He went up into a mountain apart to pray." When tempted in the garden of Gethsemane, he said, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray." In short, our Lord prayed always, and did not faint. Sinless as he was, he set us an example of diligent communion with his Father. His Godhead did not render him independent of the use of all means as a man. His very perfection was a perfection kept up through the exercise of prayer.

We ought to see in all this the immense importance of private devotion. If he who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," thus prayed continually, how much more ought we who are compassed with infirmity? If he found it needful to offer up supplications with strong crying and tears, how much more needful is it for us, who in many things offend daily?

What shall we say to those who never pray at all, in the face of such a passage as this? There are many such, it may be feared, in the list of baptized people--many who rise up in the morning without prayer, and without prayer lie down at night--many who never speak one word to God. Are they Christians? It is impossible to say so. A praying Master, like Jesus, can have no prayerless servants. The Spirit of adoption will always make a man call upon God. To be prayerless is to be Christless, Godless, and in the high road to destruction. What shall we say to those who pray, yet give but little time to their prayers? We are obliged to say that they show at present very little of the mind of Christ. Asking little, they must expect to have little. Seeking little, they cannot be surprised if they possess little. It will always be found that when prayers are few, grace, strength, peace, and hope are small.

We shall do well to watch our habits of prayer with a holy watchfulness. Here is the pulse of our Christianity. Here is the true test of our state before God. Here true religion begins in the soul, when it does begin. Here it decays and goes backward, when a man backslides from God. Let us walk in the steps of our blessed Master in this respect as well as in every other. Like him, let us be diligent in our private devotion. Let us know what it is to "depart into solitary places and pray."

We see, for another thing, in this passage, a remarkable saying of our Lord as to the purpose for which he came into the world. We find him saying, "Let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

The meaning of these words is plain and unmistakeable. Our Lord declares that he came on earth to be a preacher and a teacher. He came to fulfill the prophetic office, to be the "prophet greater than Moses," who had been so long foretold. He left the glory which he had from all eternity with the Father to do the work of an evangelist. He came down to earth to show to man the way of peace, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. One principal part of his work on earth was to go up and down and publish glad tidings, to offer healing to the broken-hearted, light to them that sat in darkness, and pardon to the chief of sinners.

We ought to observe here what infinite honor the Lord Jesus puts on the office of the preacher. It is an office which the eternal Son of God himself undertook. He might have spent his earthly ministry in instituting and keeping up ceremonies, like Aaron. He might have ruled and reigned as a king, like David. But he chose a different calling. Until the time when he died as a sacrifice for our sins, his daily, and almost hourly work was to preach.

Let us never be moved by those who cry down the preacher's office, and tell us that sacraments and other ordinances are of more importance than sermons. Let us give to every part of God's public worship its proper place and honor, but let us beware of placing any part of it above preaching. By preaching, the Church of Christ was first gathered together and founded, and by preaching, it has ever been maintained in health and prosperity. By preaching, sinners are awakened. By preaching, inquirers are led on. By preaching, saints are built up. By preaching, Christianity is being carried to the heathen world.

There are many now who sneer at missionaries, and mock at those who go out into the highways of our own land to preach to crowds in the open air. But such persons would do well to pause and consider calmly what they are doing. The very work which they ridicule is the work which turned the world upside down, and

cast heathenism to the ground. Above all, it is the very work which Christ himself undertook. The King of kings and Lord of lords himself was once a preacher. For three long years he went to and fro proclaiming the Gospel. Sometimes we see him in a house, sometimes on the mountain side, sometimes in a Jewish synagogue, sometimes in a boat on the sea. But the great work he took up was always one and the same. He came always preaching and teaching.

Let us leave this passage with a solemn resolution never to "despise prophesying." The minister we hear may not be highly gifted. The sermons that we listen to may be weak and poor. But after all, preaching is God's grand ordinance for converting and saving souls. The faithful preacher of the Gospel is handling the very weapon which the Son of God was not ashamed to employ.

Are You Asleep

**"Awake thou that sleepest."
Eph. 5:14**

I put before you now a simple question. Look through the pages of this paper and you will soon see why I ask it. "Are you asleep about your soul?"

There are many who have the name of Christians, but not the character which should go with the name. God is not King of their hearts. They mind earthly things.

Such persons are often quick and clever about the affairs of this life. They are, many of them, good men of business, good at their daily work, good masters, good servants, good neighbors, good subjects of the Queen: all this I fully allow. But it is the eternal part of them that I speak of; it is their never dying souls. And about that, if a man may judge by the little they do for it, they are careless, thoughtless, reckless, and unconcerned. They are asleep.

I do not say that God and salvation are subjects that never come across their minds: but this I say,—they have not the uppermost place there. Neither do I say that they are all alike in their lives; some of them doubtless go further in sin than others: but this I say,—they have all turned every one to his own way, and that way is not God's. I know no rule by which to judge of a man's estate but the Bible. Now when I look at the Bible I can come to only one conclusion about these people: they are asleep about their souls.

These people do not see the sinfulness of sin, and their own lost

condition by nature. They appear to make light of breaking God's commandments, and to care little whether they live according to His law or not. Yet God says that sin is the transgression of the law,—that His commandment is exceeding broad,—that every imagination of the natural heart is evil,—that sin is the thing He cannot bear, He hates it,—that the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth shall die. Surely they are asleep.

Is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

These people do not see their need of a Saviour. They appear to think it an easy matter to get to heaven, and that God will of course be merciful to them at last, some way or other, though they do not exactly know how. Yet God says that He is just and holy, and never changes,—that Christ is the only way, and none can come unto the Father but by Him,—that without His blood there can be no forgiveness of sin,—that a man without Christ is a man without hope,—that those who would be saved must believe on Jesus and come to Him, and that he who believeth not shall be damned. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

These people do not see the necessity of holiness. They appear to think it quite enough to go on as others do, and live like their neighbors. And as for praying and Bible-reading, making conscience of words and actions, studying truthfulness and gentleness, humility and charity, and keeping separate from the world, they are things they do not seem to value at all. Yet God says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord,—that there shall enter into heaven nothing that defileth,—that His people must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my

question. ARE You ASLEEP?

Worst of all, these people do not appear to feel their danger. They walk on with their eyes shut, and seem not to know that the end of their path is hell. Some dreamers fancy that they are rich when they are poor, or full when they are hungry, or well when they are sick, and awake to find it all a mistake. And this is the way that many dream about their souls. They flatter themselves they will have peace, and there will be no peace; they fancy that they are all right, and in truth they will find that they are all wrong. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

If conscience pricks you, and tells you you are yet asleep, what can I say to arouse you? Your soul is in awful peril. Without a mighty change it will be lost. When shall that change once be?

You are dying, and not ready to depart,—you are going to be judged, and not prepared to meet God,—your sins are not forgiven,—your person is not justified,—your heart is not renewed. Heaven itself would be no happiness to you if you got there, for the Lord of heaven is not your friend: what pleases Him does not please you; what He dislikes gives you no pain. His word is not your counsellor; His day is not your delight; His law is not your guide. You care little for hearing of Him: you know nothing of speaking with Him. To be forever in His company would be a thing you could not endure; and the society of saints and angels would be a weariness, and not a joy. At the rate you live at, the Bible might never have been written, and Christ might never have died, the Apostles were foolish, the New Testament Christians madmen, and the salvation of the Gospel a needless thing. Oh, awake! and sleep no more.

Think not to say you cannot believe your case is so bad, or the danger so great, or God so particular. I answer,—the devil has

been putting this lying delusion into people's hearts for nearly six thousand years. It has been his grand snare ever since the day he said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." Do not be so weak as to be taken in by it. God never failed yet to punish sin, and He never will: He never failed to make His word good, and you will find this to your cost, one day, except you repent. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you are a member of Christ's Church, and therefore feel no doubt you are as good a Christian as others. I answer,—this will only make your case worse, if you have nothing else to plead. You may be written down and registered among God's people: you may be reckoned in the number of saints; you may sit for years under the sound of the Gospel; you may use holy forms and even come to the Lord's table at regular seasons; and still, with all this, unless sin be hateful, and Christ precious, and your heart a temple of the Holy Ghost, you will prove in the end no better than a lost soul. A holy calling will never save an unholy man. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you have been baptized, and so feel confident you are born of God, and have His grace within you. I answer,—you have none of the marks which St. John has told me, in his first epistle, distinguish such a person. I do not see you confessing that Jesus is the Christ, overcoming the world,—not committing sin,—loving your brother,—doing righteousness,—keeping yourself from the wicked one. How then can I believe that you are born of God? If God were your Father, you would love Christ: if you were God's son, you would be led by His Spirit. I want stronger evidences. Show me some repentance and faith; show me a life hid with Christ in God; show me a spiritual and sanctified conversation: these are the fruits I want to see, if I am to believe you have the root of the matter in you, and are a living branch of the true vine. But without these your baptism will only add to your condemnation. Reader, awake: awake!

I speak strongly, because I feel deeply. Time is too short, life is too uncertain, to allow of standing on ceremony. At the risk of

offending, I use great plainness of speech. I cannot bear the thought of hearing you condemned in the great day of assize; of seeing your face in the crowd on God's left hand, among those who are helpless, hopeless, and beyond the reach of mercy. I cannot bear such thoughts,—they grieve me to the heart. Before the day of grace is past, and the day of vengeance begins, I call upon you to open your eyes and repent. Oh, consider your ways and be wise. Awake: awake! Why will ye die?

This day, as the ambassador of Christ, I pray you to be reconciled to God. The Lord Jesus who came into the world to save sinners,—Jesus the appointed Mediator between God and man,—Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us,—Jesus sends you a message of peace: He says, "Come unto Me."

"Come is a precious word indeed, and ought to draw you. You have sinned against heaven: heaven has not sinned against you. Yet see how the first step towards peace is on heaven's side. It is the Lord's message: "Come unto Me."

"Come" is a word of merciful invitation. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I am waiting for you: I am not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. I would have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Judgment is my strange work,—I delight in mercy. I offer the water of life to every one who will take it. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. For long time I have spread out my hands to you. I wait to be gracious. There is yet room in my Father's house. My long-suffering waits for more of the children of men to come to the mercy-seat before the last trumpet is blown,—for more wanderers to return before the door is closed for ever. Oh, sinner, come to Me!"

Come" is a word of promise and encouragement. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I have gifts ready for you: I have something of everlasting importance to bestow upon your soul. I

have received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. I have a free pardon for the most ungodly,—a full fountain for the most unclean,—a white garment for the most defiled,—a new heart for the most hardened,—healing for the broken-hearted,—rest for the heavy-laden, joy for those that mourn. Oh, sinner, it is not for nothing that I invite you! All things are ready. Come: come unto Me."

Hear the voice of the Son of God. See that you refuse not Him that speaketh. Come away from sin, which can never give you real pleasure, and will be bitter at the last; come out from a world which will never satisfy you: come unto Christ! Come, with all your sins, however many and however great,—however far you may have gone from God, and however provoking your conduct may have been. Come as you are: unfit, unmeet, unprepared as you may think yourself,—you will gain no fitness by delay. Come at once: come to the Lord Jesus Christ!

How indeed shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Where will you appear if you make light of the blood of Christ, and do despite to the Spirit of grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but never so fearful as when men fall from under the Gospel. The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible, and through the midst of warnings and invitations. Oh, beware, lest like Israel at Kadesh, you mourn over your mistake when it is too late; or, like Judas Iscariot, find out your sin when there is no space for repentance.

Arise, and call upon the Lord. Be not like Esau: sell not eternal blessings for the things of today. Surely the time past may suffice you to have been careless and prayerless, Godless and Christless, worldly and earthly-minded. Surely the time to come may be given to your soul.

Pray, I beseech you, that you may be enabled to put off the old ways and the old habits, and that you may become a new man. I yield to none in wishes for your happiness, and my best wish is

that you may be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is a better thing than riches, or health, or honour, or learning. A man may get to heaven without these, but he cannot get there without conversion. Verily if you die without having been born again you had far better never have been born at all. No man really lives till he lives unto God.

I leave my question with you. The Lord grant that it may prove a word in season to your soul. My heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may be saved. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Arise, O sleeper and call upon God. There is yet hope. Forsake not thy mercies. Do not lose thine own soul

Be Careful for Nothing

Commit means to hand over, to trust wholly to another. So, if we give our trials to Him, He will carry them. If we walk in righteousness He will carry us through. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6). There are two hands there-God's hand pressing us down, humbling us, and then God's hand lifting us up. [Cast] all your care upon him; for he careth for you (1 Peter 5:7). There are two cares in this verse-your care and His care. They are different in the original. One means anxious care, the other means Almighty care. Cast your anxious care on Him and take His Almighty care instead. No longer be overwhelmed by trouble, but believe God is able to sustain you through it. The government is on His shoulder. Believe that if you trust and obey Him and meet His will, He will look after your interests. Simply exchange burdens. Take His yoke upon you, and let Him care for you.

Counting the Cost

"Which of you, intending to build a house, does not sit down first and count the cost?"

Luke 14:28

The text which heads this page is one of great importance. Few are the people who are not often obliged to ask themselves, "What does it cost?" There is one subject on which it is especially important to count the cost. That subject is the salvation of our souls. What does it cost to be a true Christian?

Let there be no mistake about my meaning. I am not examining what it costs to save a Christian's soul. I know well that it costs nothing less than the blood of the Son of God to provide an atonement and to redeem man from hell. We "are bought with a price." The point I want to consider is another one altogether. It is what a man must be ready to give up if he wishes to be saved. It is the amount of sacrifice a man must submit to if he intends to serve Christ.

I grant freely that it costs little to be a mere outward Christian. A man who only attends a place of worship on Sunday and is tolerably moral during the week has gone as far as thousands around him ever go in religion. All this is cheap and easy work; it entails no self-denial or self-sacrifice. If this is saving Christianity that will take us to heaven when we die, we must alter the description of the way of life and write, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to heaven!"

Let me try to show precisely and particularly what it costs to be a true Christian. Let us suppose that a man is disposed to take

service with Christ and feels drawn and inclined to follow him. Let us suppose that some affliction, some sudden death, or an awakening sermon has stirred his conscience and made him feel the value of his soul and desire to be a true Christian. No doubt there is everything to encourage him. His sins may be freely forgiven, however many and great. His heart may be completely changed, however cold and hard. Christ and the Holy Spirit, mercy and grace, are all ready for him. But still he should count the cost. Let us see particularly, one by one, the things that his religion will cost him.

First, it will cost him his self-righteousness. He must cast away all pride, high thoughts, and conceit of his own goodness. He must be content to go to heaven as a poor sinner saved only by free grace and owing all to the merit and righteousness of another. He must be willing to give up all trust in his own morality, respectability, praying, Bible-reading, church-going, and sacrament-receiving, and trust in nothing but Jesus Christ.

Second, it will cost a man his sins. He must be willing to give up every habit and practice which is wrong in God's sight. He must set his face against it, quarrel with it, break off from it, fight with it, crucify it, and labor to keep it under, whatever the world around him may say or think. He must count all sins as his deadly enemies and hate every false way. They may struggle hard with him every day and sometimes almost get the mastery over him, but he must never give way to them. He must keep up a perpetual war with his sins.

Third, it will cost a man his love of ease. He must take pains and trouble if he means to run a successful race toward heaven. He must daily watch and stand on his guard, like a soldier on enemy's ground. He must take heed to his behavior every hour of the day, in every company, and in every place whether public or private, among strangers as well as at home. He must be careful over his time, tongue, temper, thoughts, imaginations, motives, and his conduct in every relation of life. He must be diligent about

his prayers, Bible reading, and his use of Sundays with all their means of grace. This sounds hard, for there is nothing we naturally dislike so much as "trouble" about our religion. We hate trouble. We secretly wish we could have a "vicarious" Christianity and could be good by proxy and have everything done for us. Anything that requires exertion and labor is entirely against the grain of our hearts.

In the last place, it will cost a man the favor of the world. He must be content to be thought ill of by man if he pleases God. He must count it no strange thing to be mocked, ridiculed, slandered, persecuted, and even hated. He must not be surprised to find his opinions and practices in religion despised and held up to scorn. He must submit to be thought by many a fool, an enthusiast, a fanatic, and to have his words perverted and his actions misrepresented.

I grant that it costs much to be a true Christian. But who in his sound senses can doubt that it is worth any cost to have the soul saved? When the ship is in danger of sinking, the crew think nothing of casting overboard the precious cargo. When a limb is mortified, a man will submit to any severe operation, even amputation, to save his life. Surely a Christian should be willing to give up anything which stands between him and heaven.

In conclusion, let every reader think seriously whether his religion costs him anything at present. Very likely it costs you nothing. Very probably it neither costs you trouble, time, thought, care, pains, self-denial, conflict, nor working of any kind. Now mark what I say: such a religion as this will never save your soul.

If you want stirring motives for serving God, think what it cost to provide a salvation for your soul. Think how the Son of God left heaven and became man, suffered on the cross, and lay in the grave to pay your debt to God and work out for you a complete redemption. Think of all this and learn that it is no light matter to possess an immortal soul.

If any reader feels that he has counted the cost and taken up the cross, I bid him persevere and press on. The time is very short. A few more years of watching and praying, a few more tossings on the sea of this world, a few more deaths and changes, a few more winters and summers and all will be over. We shall have fought our last battle and shall need to fight no more. The presence and company of Christ will make amends for all we suffer here below. Then we shall marvel that we made so much of our cross and thought so little of our crown.

Gospel Treasures

I dare be sure this paper will be read by some one who feels that his sins are not yet forgiven. Reader, are you that man?

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may seek forgiveness without delay. There is forgiveness in Jesus Christ for every one that is willing to receive it. There is every encouragement that your soul can need, to confess your sins and lay hold on this forgiveness this very day.

Reader, listen to me while I try to exhibit to you the treasure of Gospel forgiveness. I cannot describe its fulness as I ought. Its riches are indeed unsearchable (Eph. iii. 8). But if you will turn away from it you shall not be able to say in the day judgment, you did not at all know what it was.

Consider, then, for one thing, that the forgiveness set before you is a great and broad forgiveness. Hear what the Prince of Peace Himself declares: "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme" (Mark iii. 28); "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18). Yes! though your trespasses be more in number than the hairs of your head, the stars in heaven, the leaves of the forest, the blades of grass, the grains of sand on the sea shore, still they can all be pardoned. As the waters of Noah's flood covered over and hid the tops of the highest hills, so can the blood of Jesus cover over and hide your mightiest sins. "His blood cleanseth from' all sin" (1 John i. 7). Though to you they seem written with the point of a diamond, they can all be effaced from the book of God's remembrance by that precious blood. Paul names a long list of abominations which the Corinthians had

committed, and then says: "Such were some of' you: but ye are washed" (1 Cor. vi. 11).

Furthermore, it is a full and complete forgiveness. It is not like David's pardon to Absalom,-a permission to return home, but not a full restoration to favour (2 Sam. xiv. 24). It is not, as some fancy, a mere letting off, and letting alone. It is a pardon so complete, that he who has it is reckoned as righteous as if he had never sinned at all. His iniquities are blotted out. They are removed from him as far as the east from the west (Psalm ciii. 12). There remains no condemnation for him. The Father sees him joined to Christ, and is well pleased. The Son beholds him clothed with 'His own righteousness, and says, "Thou art all fair, . . . there is no spot in thee" (Cant. iv. 7). Blessed be God that it is so. I verily believe if the best of us all had only one blot left for himself to wipe out, he would miss eternal life. If the holiest child of Adam were in heaven all but his little finger, and to get in depended on himself, I am sure he would never enter the kingdom. If Noah, Daniel, and Job had had but one day's sin to wash away, they would never have been saved. Praised be God that in the matter of our pardon there is nothing left for man to do. Jesus does all, and man has only to hold out an empty hand and to receive.

Furthermore, it is a free and unconditional forgiveness. It is not burdened with an "if," like Solomon's pardon to Adonijah: "If he will show himself a worthy man (1 Kings i. 52). Nor yet are you obliged to carry a price in your hand, or bring a character with you to prove yourself deserving of mercy. Jesus requires but one character, and that is that you should feel yourself a sinful, bad man. He invites you to "buy wine and milk without money and without price," and declares, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Isaiah lv. 1; Rev xxii. 17) 'Like David in the cave of Adullam, He receives everyone that feels in distress and a debtor, and rejects none (1 Sam. xxii. 2). Are you a sinner? Do you want a Saviour? Then come to Jesus just as you are, and your soul shall live.

Again, it is an offered forgiveness I have read of earthly kings who knew not how to show mercy,-of Henry the Eighth of England, who spared neither man nor woman; of James the Fifth of Scotland, who would never show favour to a Douglas. The King of kings is not like them. He calls on man to come to Him, and be pardoned. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 4). "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah iv. 1) "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John vii. 37). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Oh, reader, it ought to be a great comfort to you and me to hear of any pardon at all; but to hear Jesus Himself inviting us, to see Jesus Himself holding out His hand to us,-the Saviour seeking the sinner before the sinner seeks the Saviour,-this is encouragement, this is strong consolation indeed!

Again, it is a willing forgiveness. I have heard of pardons granted in reply to long entreaty, and wrung out by much importunity. King Edward the Third of England would not spare the citizens of Calais till they came to him with halters round their necks, and his own Queen interceded for them on her knees. But Jesus is "good and ready to forgive" (Psalm lxxxvi. 5). He delighteth in mercy (Micah vii. 18) Judgment is His strange work. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter iii. 9). He would fain have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. ii. 4) He wept over unbelieving Jerusalem. "As I live;" He says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: why will ye die?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Ah, reader, you and I may well come boldly to the throne of grace! He who sits there is far more willing and ready to give mercy than you and I are to receive it.

Besides this, it is a tried forgiveness. Thousands and tens of thousands have sought for pardon at the mercy-seat of Christ, and not one has ever returned to say that he sought in vain; sinners of every name and nation,-sinners of every sort and description, have knocked at the door of the fold, and none have

ever been refused admission. Zacchæus the extortioner, Magdalene the harlot, Saul the persecutor, Peter the denier of his Lord, the Jews who crucified the Prince of Life, the idolatrous Athenians, the adulterous Corinthians, the ignorant Africans, the bloodthirsty New Zealanders,-all have ventured their souls on Christ's promises of pardon, and none have ever found them fail. Ah, reader, if the way I set before you were a new and untravelled way, you might well feel faint-hearted! But it is not so. It is an old path. It is a path worn by the feet of many pilgrims, and a path in which the footsteps are all one way. The treasury of Christ's mercies has never been found empty. The well of living waters has never proved dry.

Beside this, it is a present forgiveness. All that believe in Jesus are at once justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38). The very day the younger son returned to his father's house he was clothed with the best robe, had the ring put on his hand, and shoes on his feet (Luke xv.). The very day Zacchæus received Jesus he heard these comfortable words "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke xix. 9). The very day that David said, "I have sinned against the Lord," he was told by Nathan, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin" (2 Sam. xii. 13). The very day you first flee to Christ, your sins are all removed. Your pardon is not a thing far away, to be obtained only after many years. It is nigh at hand. It is close to you, within your reach, all ready to be bestowed. Believe, and that very moment it is your own. "He that believeth is not condemned" (John iii. 18). It is not said, "he shall not be," or "will not be," but "is not." From the time of his believing, condemnation is gone. "He that believeth hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). It is not said, "he shall have," or "will have," it is "hath" It is his own as surely as if he was in heaven, though not so evidently so to his own eyes. Ah, reader, you must not think forgiveness will be nearer to a believer in the day of judgment than it was in the hour he first believed! His complete salvation from the power of sin is every year nearer and nearer to him; but as to his forgiveness and justification, it is a finished work from the very minute he first commits himself to Christ.

Last, and best of all, it is an everlasting forgiveness. It is not like Shimei's pardon, a pardon that may sometime be revoked and taken away (1 Kings ii. 9). Once justified you are justified forever. Once written down in the book of life, your name shall never be blotted out. The sins of God's children are said to be cast into the depths of the sea,-to be sought for and not found,-to be remembered no more,-to be cast behind God's back (Mic. vii. 19; Jer. 1. 20; xxxi. 34; Isaiah xxxviii. 17). Some people fancy they may be justified one year and condemned another,-children of adoption at one time and strangers by and by,-heirs of the kingdom in the beginning of their days, and yet servants of the devil in their end. I cannot find this in the Bible. As the New Zealander told the Romish priest, "I do not see it in the Book." It seems to me to overturn the good news of the Gospel altogether, and to tear up its comforts by the roots. I believe the salvation Jesus offers is an everlasting salvation, and a pardon once sealed with His blood shall never be reversed.

Reader, I have set before you the nature of the forgiveness offered to you. I have told you but little of it, for my words are weaker than my will. The half of it remains untold. The greatness of it is far more than any report of mine. But I think I have said enough to show you it is worth the seeking, and I can wish you nothing better than that you may strive to make it your own.

Talking with Nicodemus

"I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must all be born from above.' The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:5-8)

The conversation between Christ and Nicodemus is one of the most important passages in the whole Bible. Nowhere else do we find stronger statements about those two mighty subjects--the new birth, and salvation by faith in the Son of God. The servant of Christ will do well to make himself thoroughly acquainted with this chapter. A man may be ignorant of many things in religion and yet be saved. But to be ignorant of the matters handled in this chapter is to be in the broad way which leads to destruction.

We should notice, firstly, what a weak and feeble beginning a man may make in religion and yet finally prove a strong Christian. We are told of a certain Pharisee, named Nicodemus, who feeling concerned about his soul, "came to Jesus by night." There can be little doubt that Nicodemus acted as he did from the fear of man. He was afraid of what man would think, say or do if his visit to Jesus was known. He came "by night," because he had not faith and courage enough to come by day. And yet there was a time afterwards when this very Nicodemus took our Lord's part in open day in the council of the Jews. "Does our law judge any man," he said, "before it hear him, and know what he does." Nor was this all. There came a time when this very Nicodemus was one of the only two men who did honor to our Lord's dead body. He helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus, when even the apostles had

forsaken their Master and fled. His last things were more than his first. Though he began badly, he ended well.

The history of Nicodemus is meant to teach us that we should never "despise the day of small things" in religion. We must not set down a man as having no grace because his first steps toward God are timid and wavering, and the first movements of his soul are uncertain, hesitating, and stamped with much imperfection. We must remember our Lord's reception of Nicodemus. He did not "break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax." Like Him, let us take inquirers by the hand and deal with them gently and lovingly. In everything there must be a beginning. It is not those who make the most flaming profession of religion at first who endure the longest and prove the most steadfast. Judas Iscariot was an apostle when Nicodemus was just groping his way slowly into full light. Yet afterward, when Nicodemus was boldly helping to bury his crucified Savior, Judas Iscariot had betrayed Him and hanged himself! This is a fact which ought not to be forgotten.

We should notice, secondly, what a mighty change our Lord declares to be needful to salvation, and what a remarkable expression He uses in describing it. He speaks of a new birth. He says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He announces the same truth in other words, in order to make it more plain to his hearer's mind: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By this expression, He meant Nicodemus to understand that "no one could become His disciple, unless his inward man was as thoroughly cleansed and renewed by the Spirit as the outward man is cleansed by water." To possess the privileges of Judaism, a man only needed to be born of the seed of Abraham after the flesh. To possess the privileges of Christ's kingdom, a man must be born again of the Holy Spirit. The change which our Lord here declares needful to salvation is evidently no slight or superficial one. It is not merely reformation, or amendment, or moral change, or outward

alteration of life. It is a thorough change of heart, will, and character. It is a resurrection. It is a new creation. It is a passing from death to life. It is the implanting into our dead hearts of a new principle from above. It is the calling into existence of a new creature, with a new nature, new habits of life, new tastes, new desires, new appetites, new judgments, new opinions, new hopes, and new fears. All this, and nothing less than this, is implied when our Lord declares that we all need a "new birth."

This change of heart is rendered absolutely necessary to salvation by the corrupt condition in which we are all, without exception, born. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Our nature is thoroughly fallen. The carnal mind is enmity against God. We come into the world without faith, love, or fear toward God. We have no natural inclination to serve Him or obey Him, and no natural pleasure in doing His will. Left to himself, no child of Adam would ever turn to God. The truest description of the change which we all need in order to make us real Christians is the expression, "new birth."

This mighty change, it must never be forgotten, we cannot give to ourselves. The very name which our Lord gives to it is a convincing proof of this. He calls it "a birth." No man is the author of his own existence, and no man can quicken his own soul. We might as well expect a dead man to give himself life, as expect a natural man to make himself spiritual. A power from above must be put in exercise, even that same power which created the world. Man can do many things, but he cannot give life either to himself or to others. To give life is the peculiar prerogative of God. Well may our Lord declare that we need to be "born again!"

We should notice, lastly, the instructive comparison which our Lord uses in explaining the new birth. He saw Nicodemus perplexed and astonished by the things he had just heard. He graciously helped his wondering mind by an illustration drawn from "the wind." A more beautiful and fitting illustration of the work of the Spirit it is impossible to conceive.

There is much about the wind that is mysterious and inexplicable. "You cannot tell," says our Lord, "whence it comes and where it goes." We cannot handle it with our hands or see it with our eyes. When the wind blows, we cannot point out the exact spot where its breath first began to be felt, and the exact distance to which its influence shall extend. But we do not on that account deny its presence. It is just the same with the operations of the Spirit in the new birth of man. They may be mysterious, sovereign, and incomprehensible to us in many ways, but it is foolish to stumble at them because there is much we cannot explain. Whatever mystery there may be about the wind, its presence may always be known by its sound and effects. "You hear the sound thereof," says our Lord. When our ears hear it whistling in the windows and our eyes see the clouds driving before it, we do not hesitate to say, "There is wind." It is just the same with the operations of the Holy Spirit in the new birth of man. Marvelous and incomprehensible as His work may be, it is work that can always be seen and known. The new birth is a thing that "cannot be hidden." There will always be visible "fruits of the Spirit" in every one that is born of the Spirit.

Would we know what the marks of the new birth are? We shall find them already written for our learning in the First Epistle of John. The man born of God "believes that Jesus is the Christ,"--"does not commit sin,"--"does righteousness,"--"loves the brethren,"--"overcomes the world,"--"keeps himself from the wicked one." This is the man born of the Spirit! Where these fruits are to be seen, there is the new birth of which our Lord is speaking. He that lacks these marks is yet dead in trespasses and sins.

And now let us solemnly ask ourselves whether we know anything of the mighty change of which we have been reading? Have we been born again? Can any marks of the new birth be seen in us? Can the sound of the Spirit be heard in our daily conversation? Is the image and superscription of the Spirit to be

discerned in our lives? Happy is the man who can give satisfactory answers to these questions! A day will come when those who are not born again will wish that they had never been born at all.

Heaven

"But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

2 Samuel 12:23

I wish to confine myself to one single point of deep and momentous interest to us, and that is, "Shall we know one another in heaven?" Now, what does the Scripture say on this subject? I grant freely that there are not many texts in the Bible which touch the subject at all. I admit fully that pious and learned divines are not of one mind with me about the matter in hand. But in theology, I dare not call any man master and father. My only aim and desire is to find out what the Bible says, and to take my stand upon its teaching.

Let us hear what David said when his child was dead. "But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." What can these words mean but that David hoped to see his child and meet him again in another world? This was evidently the hope that cheered him and made him dry his tears. The separation would not be forever.

Let us hear what St. Paul said to the Thessalonians. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" These words must surely mean that the apostle expected to recognize his beloved Thessalonian converts in the day of Christ's second advent. He rejoiced in the thought that he would see them face to face at the last day, would stand side by side with them before the throne, and would be able to say, "Here am I, and the seals which thou did give to my ministry."

Paul says again, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” There would be no point in these words of consolation if they did not imply the mutual recognition of saints. The hope with which he cheers wearied Christians is the hope of meeting their beloved friends again. He does not merely say, “Sorrow not, for they are at rest—they are happy—they are free from pain and trouble—they are better off than they would be here below.” No! he goes a step further. He says, “God shall bring them with Christ, when he brings them back to the world. You are not parted forever. You will meet again.”

I commend these three passages to the reader’s attentive consideration. To my eye, they all seem to point to only one conclusion. They all imply the same great truth, that saints in heaven shall know one another. They shall have the same body and the same character that they had on earth, but a body perfected and transformed like Christ’s in his transfiguration and a character perfected and purified from all sin. In the moment that we meet our several friends in heaven, we shall at once know them, and they will at once know us.

There is something to my mind unspeakably glorious in this prospect. Heaven will be no strange place to us when we get there. We shall feel at home. We shall see all of whom we read in Scripture and know them all, and mark the peculiar graces of each. We shall see Noah and remember his witness for God in ungodly times. We shall see Abraham and remember his faith, Isaac and remember his meekness, Moses and remember his patience, David and remember all his troubles. We shall sit down with Peter, James, John, and Paul, and remember all their toil when they laid the foundations of the Church. If it is pleasant to know one or two saints and meet them occasionally now, what will it be to know them all and to dwell with them forever!



Bible Verses Everyone Should Know

1 Cor 6:9-10

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Cor 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

1 Cor 10:31

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Cor 12:13

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be

Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Cor 15:57-58

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1 John 1:3

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 3:22

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written

unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1 Tim 2:5-6

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 Tim 4:15

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

2 Cor 5:14-15

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

2 Cor 5:19-20

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed

unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Tim 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Tim 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 3:19

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the

presence of the Lord;

Acts 4:12

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 8:22

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Acts 26:20

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Col 3:23-24

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Eph 2:8-9

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Eph 4:30-32

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Gal 5:16-17

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Heb 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 9:27

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Heb 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Heb 13:5-6

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Isa 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Isa 40:31

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isa 41:10

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

James 1:22

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James 4:17

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him

it is sin.

John 1:12

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 6:37

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

John 6:47

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 6:65

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

John 8:24

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins.

John 10:27-28

**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish,
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**

John 10:16

**And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I
must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one
fold, [and] one shepherd.**

John 11:25

**Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that
believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.**

John 11:26

**And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.
Believest thou this?**

John 14:6

**Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man
cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

John 14:27-28

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 15:4

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5

I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Joshua 1:9

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Luke 13:3

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Mark 8:38

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Matt 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matt 21:22

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matt 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Phil 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Phil 4:6-7

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Phil 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 1:33

But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs 28:13

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Psalms 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalms 34:7

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Psalms 38:18

For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

Psalms 86:5

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalms 91:10-11

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Psalms 103:10-12

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalms 119:9-11

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalms 119:105

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Rev 1:3

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Rev 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Rev 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Rom 1:22

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

Rom 3:10

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Rom 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rom 4:4

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Rom 5:8

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were

yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:12

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Rom 6:12-13

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Rom 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 8:32

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Rom 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Rom 12:20-21

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Scripture Promises



1. **Help in Times of Trouble**
2. **Blessings from God**
3. **Divine Protection**
4. **Forgiveness of Sin**
5. **The Giving of Wisdom**
6. **God Will Be With Us**
7. **Eternal Life**

In Times of Trouble

DELIVERANCE FROM TROUBLE:

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all"
(Psalm 34:19).

"Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth"
(Psalm 71:20).

"For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness"
(Psalm 18:27, 28).

"They cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses"
(Psalm 107:19).

"Their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow"
(Jeremiah 31:12, 13).

SUPPORT IN TROUBLE:

"He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard"
(Psalm 22:24).

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble"
(Psalm 37:24, 39).

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah"
(Psalm 46:1-3).

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved"
(Psalm 55:22).

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me"
(Psalm 138:7).

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he

plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness"
(Micah 7:8, 9).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"
(Matthew 11:28).

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"
(John 16:33).

Blessings from God

"Thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield"
(Psalm 5:12).

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over"
(Psalm 23:1, 5).

"Blessings are upon the head of the just. The desire of the righteous shall be granted. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness"
(Proverbs 10:6, 24, 28).

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"
(Matthew 6:33).

Divine Protection

"The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long"
(Deuteronomy 33:12).

"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"
(Psalm 16:8).

"I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid"
(Ezekiel 34:25, 28).

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"
(Psalm 27:1).

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalm 91:1, 2, 4, 10).

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore"

(Psalm 121:1-8).

"But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil"

(Proverbs 1:33).

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour"

(Isaiah 43:2, 3).

Forgiveness of Sin

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:1, 2).

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5, 6).

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18, 19).

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

"I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me" (Jeremiah 33:8).

"He shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1Timothy 1:15).

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1John 2:1, 12).

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:7, 9).

"He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:26, 28).



The Giving of Wisdom

"I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons" (Psalm 16:7).

"The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous" (Proverbs 2:6, 7).

"For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge" (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

God will be with us

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exodus 33:14).

"The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you" (2 Chronicles 15:2).

"The LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me" (John 16:27).

Eternal Life

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
(Matthew 25:46)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
(John 3:16)

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
(Romans 6:23)

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."
(John 10:9)

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."
(John 6:40)





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